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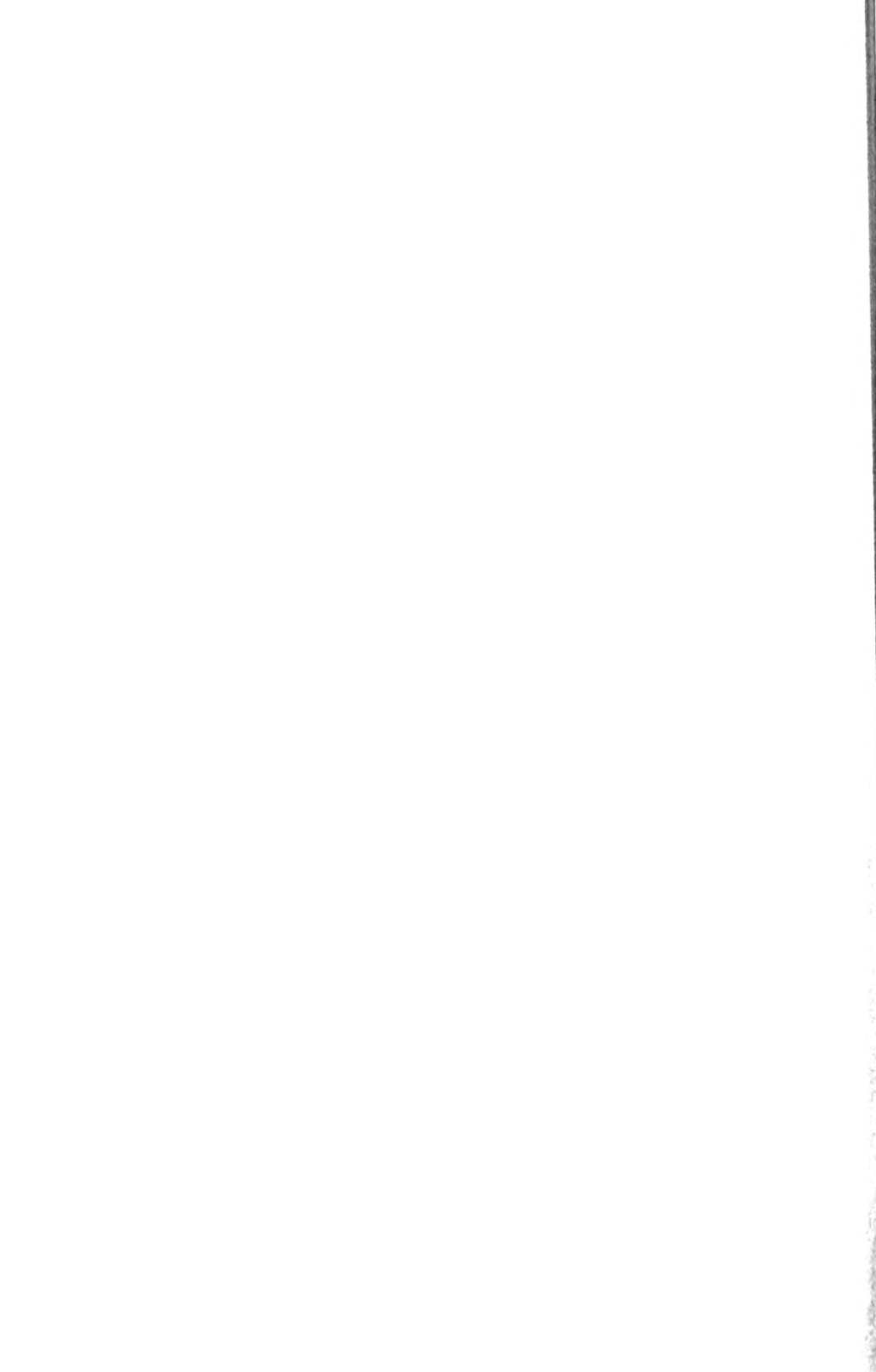


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STUDIES IN BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHY

BY

ARTHUR MITCHELL, PH. D.

Assistant Professor of Philosophy in the University of Kansas

LAWRENCE, JANUARY, 1914

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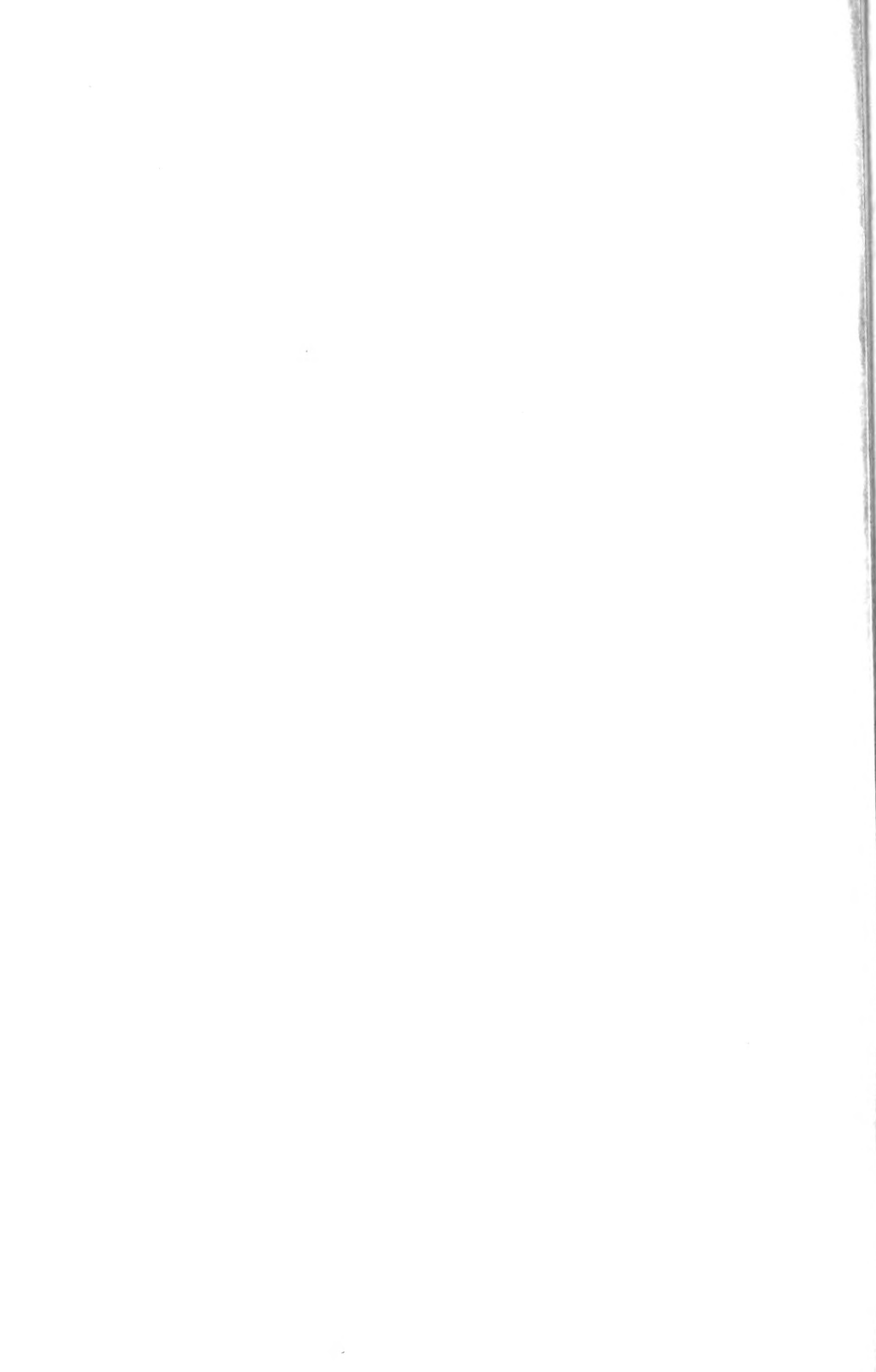
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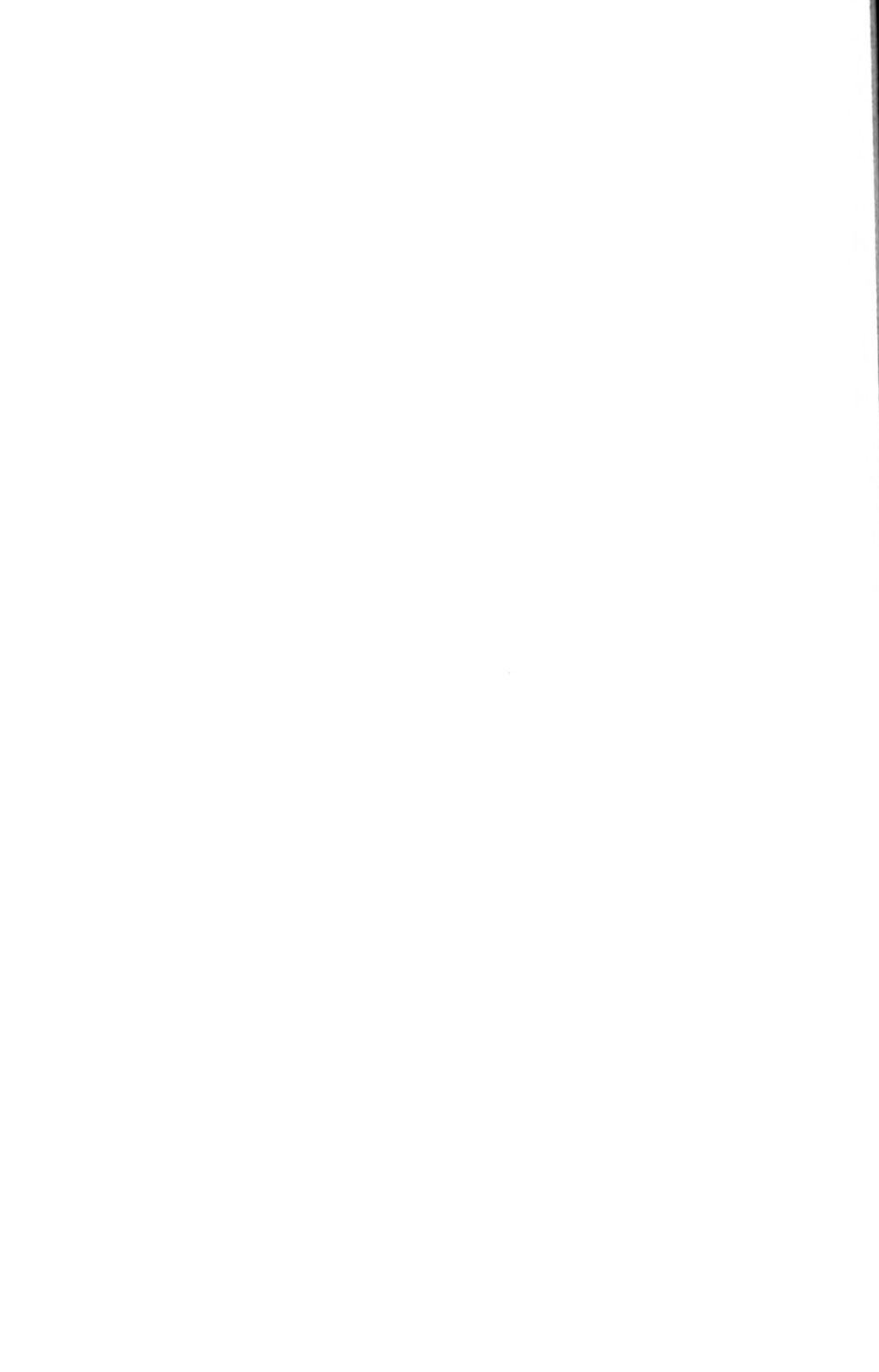
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PREFACE

In the second part of this essay material from two papers published in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* has been laid under contribution, and also from my doctor's thesis. Much of this material was written in 1909, since which time a number of views which some of mine resemble more or less have been published. It has not seemed to me necessary always to note these agreements of thought arrived at independently by myself and others.

I have reported a part of the brilliant critique of Bergson's doctrine of freedom by Monsieur Gustave Belot. This expresses with elegance and force much of my own reaction to the doctrine. Indebtedness to Belot and other authors is acknowledged throughout the essay. Except possibly Professor Bergson himself, there is no one who has influenced my thinking so much as Professor Ralph Barton Perry, my teacher who introduced me to Bergson's philosophy. Professor Perry's writings are full of finished renderings of less articulate convictions of my own; and, though I have often referred to and quoted from his work explicitly, his instruction and stimulus have had so much to do with the history of my thinking that I could never say just what I owe him, but only that I owe him much.

Professor Bergson has permitted me to translate from a private letter some comments of his on certain of my criticisms.

Professor Edmund H. Hollands has given the first two parts a careful reading, in the manuscript, and his able criticisms and suggestions, mainly concerning the matter itself, have been of great benefit.

I am no less obliged, for help in improving the literary form, to Professor S. L. Whitcomb, whose critical ability has been

patiently applied to a careful revision, page by page, of the whole manuscript.

I have tried, in the third part, to justify explicitly the great and unique value which I attach to Professor Bergson's work, antagonistic though my own convictions are to his results. And, besides this aim, it has seemed to me interesting and instructive, in view of the very considerable literature which has grown up about Bergson's philosophy, to bring together in a comparative view the judgments of a number of his exponents.

For literature by and about Bergson, the reader is referred to the exhaustive bibliography prepared last year by the Columbia University Press under the direction of Miss Isadore G. Mudge, the Reference Librarian. "The bibliography includes 90 books and articles by Professor Bergson (including translations of his works) and 417 books and articles about him. These 417 items represent 11 different languages divided as follows:—French 170, English 159, German 40, Italian 19, Polish 5, Dutch 3, Spanish 3, Roumanian 2, Swedish 2, Hungarian 1." This work is invaluable to the student of Bergson. It is incomparably the fullest Bergson bibliography extant.

ARTHUR MITCHELL.

University of Kansas,
January, 1914.

PART ONE
BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHIC METHOD



CHAPTER I

THE RELATION OF PHILOSOPHIC METHOD TO THE DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY

One of the problems of philosophy is the nature of philosophy itself. In recognizing such a problem at all, I suppose, the beginning of its solution has been made. For the very question, what is this or that? is conditioned on an incipient definition of the subject of it, a discriminating acknowledgement of it as something in particular, and, so, as something already more or less qualified or defined. Certainly there would be no common problem and no difference of theory without such initial agreement as a point of reference in disagreeing.

But the explicit statement of this starting point of agreement encounters a practical dilemma. On the one hand, anything can be defined in terms so general that the thing is bound to be included: make the genus large enough and it includes anything. The limit, in this direction, would be to define the object as a case of being; which would be safe, but hardly a start toward determining anything about it. On the other hand, the least advance toward narrowing the meaning incurs a very rigorous obligation to produce a principle of selection which shall be a satisfactory logical warrant for narrowing it in just the way selected, since this way excludes others whose claims may be in question. The situation is thus beset with the pitfall of logical presumption.

There are three quite distinct conceptions of philosophy, in the form of ill criticized assumption, each of which is taken by its adherents to be unquestionable—as safe as the concept “being.” I will word them thus: (1) An absolute *evaluation* of reality; (2) A *revelation* of reality in its *essential nature*; (3) A *comprehension* of the *meaning* of reality.

The first of these conceptions is that of Kant and Fichte and those philosophers to whom reality seems unrelated to apprehending consciousness, related only to will. Reality is neither directly nor indirectly perceivable. Knowledge of it is possible—if the term is proper at all—only in the broadest sense of “knowledge,” the sense equivalent to “consciousness,” within which will is sharply distinguished from two more or less receptive or cognitive modes, thinking and feeling. Knowledge of reality is thus, for this type of philosopher, a practical, personal evaluation of it, only; a moral disposition or attitude.

The second conception is Professor Bergson's; its meaning is a peculiarly intimate acquaintance with reality. It is a relationship between reality and consciousness in the aesthetic mode, consciousness as the quality-knowing faculty, very explicitly distinguished by Bergson, under the name “intuition,” from the relation-knowing or intellectual faculty.

The third conception, the analytic or intellectualistic, means knowledge about reality, such knowledge as may be relatively independent of acquaintance. The second and third conceptions are distinct from each other only in emphasis, and may be indefinitely approximated toward each other, to the limit of mutual identity. But, historically, the philosopher's besetting sin of hypostasis has pushed the emphasis, in each of these two conceptions, to so vicious an extreme that they contrast with each other sharply. Pushed to such extreme, the third conception has been stigmatized by adherents of the second as “vicious” conceptualism or intellectualism. By the same right, the intellectualist may denounce intuitionism as equally “vicious.”

To these three conceptions of philosophy this is common: a relationship between reality and consciousness which is apogeeal. Philosophy is at any rate a *supreme experience*, a mode of consciousness which is eminent over other modes. But this initial generalization is too indeterminate to constitute a satisfactory theory of the nature of philosophy; whereas (for the other horn of the dilemma), the above attempts at greater specificity appear to invoke no logical principle, but rather to follow a deep-lying personal instinct, without due critical reflection on it; in other words, without logical justification of it. They all beg the question.

Such ill criticized assumption concerning the nature of philos-

ophy is what determines a philosopher's "method" in distinction from his "doctrine." The names voluntarism, intuitionism and rationalism have been applied to philosophies whose method is one or other of the three outlined above. Religion, art and science are their models, respectively. Under voluntarism fall the romantic and the pietistic philosophies, wherein value is all that is real, and personal attitude towards value is the only mode of consciousness that illuminates reality. Intuitionism includes radical empiricism, temporalism and mysticism. Such philosophies are based on the conviction that only quality is real, only intuition is knowledge. And under rationalism are positivism and absolutism, in which reality is order and knowledge is reason.

If art, science and religion correspond to the ancient triad feeling (intuition), thought (intellect) and will, it would seem either that philosophy must be consciousness employed in one or more of these modes, or else that a fourth mode of consciousness, co-ordinate with these, must correspond to philosophy. Such a mode has not been discovered. Philosophy must therefore be one or two or all three of the above things. Can analysis of that generalization which was derived above from the more specific definitions produce a logical principle capable of determining the genuine philosophic method among the three modes of consciousness, feeling, thought and will? Yes, such analysis of the *supremacy* which is a feature common to all three conceptions of philosophy proves unequivocally that philosophy must be a function of intellect, and cannot be a function either of will or of intuition.

This would not be the case, needless to say, if "supremacy" were here a eulogism. Eulogistically, either of the three modes of consciousness has equal claim to supremacy. That mode of consciousness to which reality is most interesting is supreme, in the eulogistic sense, and this depends on the philosopher's personal constitution. To the man of dominating intuition, the relations and teleology of things may be incidental characters of them; but, by comparison with reality's qualitative aspect, those other aspects are relatively extrinsic and accidental. In whatever sense it may not be true, in the eulogistic sense it is true that such a man's supreme experience is intuitional rather than intellectual or ethical. Bergson's psychological life seems to be of such a type. But, for the man of ethical, and for the man of intellectual

prepossession, supreme experience cannot be intuitional, in this sense of supreme. Yet, if an intuitional bent be regarded by anyone as a hopeful qualification for effective philosophizing, no intuitionist denies to the man in whom reason or will, instead, is paramount, the possibility, by proper effort, of achieving the genuinely philosophic—that is to say, intuitional—activity. And when such a man does, in spite of difficulty, achieve it, it has the same supremacy, as philosophy, that it has for the intuitionist, for whom it is, more fortunately, *also* supremely congenial and “worth while”. It is not this latter supremacy, therefore, but the other, which distinguishes philosophy, on the intuitionist conception; and that other supremacy has a meaning which is thus proved to be independent of relation to any constitutional prepossession or aptness. If philosophy is intuitional, this is not because intuition is any man’s most characteristic faculty.

And so of the two other modes of consciousness, reason and will, in which, in different beings, according to their constitution, life most naturally and best finds realization: for each of these modes of consciousness, as for the intuitional mode, there is one sort of experience, called philosophy, which is distinguished by a certain supremacy of self-same nature, independent of any distinction of personal constitution among philosophers. The voluntarist, indeed, might claim a peculiarly eulogistic supremacy for volitional experience over any other kind; for it is ethically supreme for all, whatever one’s constitutional bent. But its ethical supremacy is no more the *philosophic quale* of volitional experience, on the voluntaristic conception of philosophy, than is its other eulogistic supremacy, its mere congeniality, for the strongly volitional type of character. For, men of such character may be conspicuously deficient in philosophic faculty in the judgment of all, including the voluntarist philosopher.

Reason, finally, commands recognition of supremacy, among the modes of consciousness, in another sense, a sense distinct from the imperative or ethical supremacy of will. The supremacy of reason is its exclusive reflectiveness; and reflectiveness as the *quale* of reason is the same character as criticalness; that is, it is the faculty of judgment. It is important to note that this critical reflectiveness is a *differentia* of reason; it is not a character of intuition nor of will. The proof is that reflection is the substitution of a relational for a substantive object of consciousness, and relationality

is nothing else than rationality. Thus, if feeling, will and rational thought are conceptually distinct, reflectiveness is foreign to the first two, and to anything coordinately distinct from rational thought. When consciousness is employed with an emphasis on the *qualities* of its object, in distinction from aspects of value and relation (which also belong to any object), consciousness is intuitive, in the intuitionist sense of the term. In entering a consciousness, the qualities become, *ipso facto*, content of that consciousness, taking their place in this setting under the name "sensations," or "sense data." It is the act of reflection which "sets" the mind's data in contexts; which is aware of contexts, that is, and of the setting of data in them. It is the reflective act which names its data accordingly, as "quality" or "sensation", and is conscious of them as elements of their relational setting. Consciousness is volitional when its focus is a value. In the context of the subject's consciousness, the value becomes a purpose. Thus value as substantive object of consciousness, again, is object of will just as the substantive quality was object of intuition; while value as element in the relational complex in which it is known as "purpose," is object of reflection. Reason, then,—that is to say, mind active in the relation-knowing way—is the mode of consciousness in virtue of which mind is reflective, critical, judgment-forming; and it is a confusion among definitions of intuition, will and reason, to attribute reflectiveness to intuition or to will, as such. The peculiar supremacy of reason which inheres in reason's reflectiveness is due to the inclusion of consciousness itself in the content of relational consciousness and of no other mode of consciousness.

Intuitionists and voluntarists, the same as intellectualists, do, as a fact, always characterize that supremacy which distinguishes philosophy, in no other way than the critical way. There is no dissent, in intuitionist or voluntarist schools of philosophic method, from this residual core of meaning in the conception of philosophy: by universal consent philosophy is consciousness (in whatever mode) sitting in judgment on its own findings; philosophy is critical reflection. And *therein* is an ultimateness and absoluteness—in a word, a supremacy—which belongs to philosophy, on any view of philosophy, and to no other type of mental activity. But in rationalism, or intellectualism, alone, it is recognized that reflection, as such, is essentially and distinctively rational.

It is, then, the contention of this essay that the supremacy peculiar to philosophy—which, by common consent of voluntarism and intuitionism, is no eulogistic nor even ethical supremacy, but critical—decides absolutely, among the three modes of consciousness, against will and intuition in favor of intellect, as the organ of philosophy, of intellectualism as the sole genuinely philosophic method. Kant called his voluntarism the “Critical Philosophy,” to distinguish it, as genuine philosophy, from what would be but failed (because it was not critical) to be philosophy. Critical his philosophy is; but because it is critical, it contradicts its own voluntarism—the assertion that reality is knowable only in obedience of will, and not in judgment. A contradiction; for *this* (the gist of his voluntarism) is a judgment whose subject is reality. The inevitable fundamental intellectuality of noumenal knowledge is concealed, for Kant, under the phrase “postulate of will.” A postulate, so far as it is genuine knowledge, has indeed the character of necessity, but its necessity is simply the fact of logical implication.

With the intuitionist variety, and particularly the Bergsonian variety of anti-intellectualism, this essay is largely to be concerned. At this point I merely note the inevitable contradiction in Bergson's intuitionism, as in Kant's voluntarism. Intuition, Bergson explains, is “instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of *reflecting* upon its *object* and of enlarging it indefinitely.”¹ Now, consciousness reflecting upon its own data is criticism, predication, classification, judgment—whatever it is, it is the *objectifying* of the data of consciousness, a thing which it is essential to instinct or intuition, on Bergson's own conception of them, never to do, and which, precisely, on his conception, is the distinguishing function of intellect. “Instinct is sympathy,” says Bergson, in the same passage; and the sense in which instinct is sympathy is lucidly and emphatically explained as just this, that there is no distinction of subject and object, in instinct; they are identical. Whereas, intelligence or intellect is explicitly distinguished by him from instinct primarily in the disjunction

1. *Creative Evolution* p. 176. I have italicized “reflecting” and “object” to indicate the contradiction of “instinct.” And since, for Bergson, intuition is philosophic consciousness, this reflectiveness which he imputes to it is no accident, no inadvertence. Intuition must, indeed, in order to be philosophic, be reflective; that is to say, it must absolutely contradict its own nature. (In all of the references to Bergson's works, the pages mentioned are those of the English translation.)

of subject and object. It is merely to turn his back on his own use of these terms to describe philosophy as instinct extending its *object* and reflecting upon itself.

That the case of philosophical anti-intellectualism is a hopeless paradox, whether in voluntarism or in intuitionism, each of these methods itself best proves by its own inevitable intellectualism. The terms voluntarism, intuitionism, and rationalism express no real distinction of psychological mode, in philosophizing, since the psychology of every philosophy is necessarily characterized by that critical reflectiveness which constitutes philosophy a function of intellect. Philosophy is always interpretation, a function alien to what anybody ever meant either by will or by intuition; a function whose essential distinctness from both those functions is attested universally in such synonyms of "interpretation" as judgment, conception, understanding, reason.

There are, it is true, voluntaristic and intuitionistic, philosophies of the highest importance. And the intention of their authors is to distinguish their method from the rationalistic method. Are they foredoomed to futility on this account? So far as this intention is realized—yes, unquestionably. No philosophy that were itself a function either of will or of intuition is conceivable, since it would then lack the essence of philosophy, which is critical primacy. That philosophies designated by these methodological terms may be invaluable products, it is necessary only that these terms apply in fact not to the psychological method of the philosophy but to its psychological starting-point. They express a constitutional bias in the philosopher, who, after all, is human. To some the qualities of things; to others, value; and, finally, to other some, the order of reality is the "essence" of reality. Such essentialness is eulogism, of course. For it is an irreducible psychological fact that there are religious, æsthetic and scientific types of mind. Each to his bias; each to his taste. The apogee of living is religion to the first, art to the second, science to the third. Hence the illusion that philosophy, which must needs be experience supremely critical, is experience eulogistically supreme. Is not this illusion chargeable to failure to see in these three modes of consciousness three emphases or biases of living? To the æsthete, certainly, quality must be realest essence. But it cannot be so to the zealot; for, to him,

that is value: nor to the intellectualist; to him it is order.

If aesthete and zealot will philosophize, they are at this disadvantage with the wise man, that their philosophy can do no more, in expressing the nature of this "realist essence" of reality, than the wise man's rationalism may do—discourse about it, interpret it. Philosophy indeed never can, and never should aspire to enter into the inner nature of reality in any such sense as the immediatism of Bergson and James summons it to do. There is art and there is religion for that. It is not clear how the qualitative or how the teleological aspect of reality is more internal to it than its relational aspect; but, at any rate, philosophy has its own interest, and that is distinct from those of art and religion. Wherefore the own proper interest of art or of religion is not served in their philosophy; in their philosophy they deny themselves. The efforts of such philosophies to wrest from reality, in a non-intellectual way, its secret, must be rather superhuman. This characterization is hardly a burlesque of Bergson's own observations on his method, for it is little less than the repudiation of our natural constitution, to which he exhorts us.² But, as with Kant, so with Bergson, prodigies of subtlety fail to produce a revelation of truth that is so subtle as to be inarticulate because immediate, or that does not lend itself to discussion and interpretation. Or, if this is not to be looked for in a philosophy which is 'a method rather than a doctrine,' neither is there any suggestion how such revelation may be socialized, rendered human; or even, in fact, how it can assume *meaning*, meaning to the philosopher himself (which is surely indispensable to truth), without becoming predication—assertion and denial;—that is to say, without becoming judgment. If humans make superhuman effort, it should not be surprising if the result is self-contradiction.

2. See especially *Creative Evolution*, pp. 191-2 and 266.

CHAPTER II

BERGSON'S CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON

What, then, is called philosophic "method" and is distinguished thereby from "doctrine," is really, in fact, always the cardinal principle of the *content* of the philosophy in question, its fundamental *doctrine*. If this doctrine is acceptable to reason, if it is reasonable, logical principles must determine it. No anti-intellectualist philosophy legitimately evades the rules of the game of dialectic by the representation that it is a 'method rather than a doctrine.' For this is the game that anyone plays who undertakes to show, by reasonable discourse, why reality and knowledge conform to a certain definition, or (the same mental procedure) why they do not conform to other definitions. Since dialectic is just significant discourse with a meaning to be judged, it may vary in form between any degree of syllogistic baldness, at one extreme, and of suggestive subtlety at the other. It is dialectic if it is constituted of statements, explicit or implied, which relate to each other.

There is, therefore, I say, a misleading irrelevance in the characterization which Bergson himself has set the fashion of attributing to his philosophy, the characterization of it as rather a method than a system of doctrine. A method implies a system, that is to say an ordered conviction about the nature of reality and knowledge. Such a system is essential to any meaning in Bergson's method.

Intellectualism in philosophy implies the conviction that the parts of reality are connected together in thinkable ways; that a comprehensive understanding of things as a connected system or unity is therefore theoretically possible; if actually impossible,

this is merely because of the endlessness of relationships and the limitedness of any actual thinker's time and strength. But in fact even human finitude is no obstacle to a comprehension of the principles of reality. Detail is immaterial to the unity of such a view.

One of the sayings attributed to Professor James is that there is one thing you can always pronounce with assurance, upon any philosophical system, in advance of hearing a word of it, and that is that it is false. This suggests at any rate, very well, the meaning of philosophical anti-intellectualism, which implies the conviction contradictory to intellectualism, to wit that the parts of reality are not connected in thinkable ways.

The connectedness of the intellectualist's universe may have any degree of significance or casualness. A mere "and" may express much of it.³ Intellectualism may be as pluralistic in this sense as you like, or as monistic. But if things are a universe in any such sense that they are comprehensible in intellect's discursive way, which anti-intellectualism denies—on such a hypothesis anti-intellectualism and intellectualism have commonly agreed that some principle is embodied in this total comprehensibility, a supreme induction, which would constitute the final interpretation of any fact. Like a master-key, it would open all the chambers of the many-mansioned universe. Every philosopher, as a fact, has some controlling thought which has the value, for him, of such a supreme principle. But always, it seems, there are doors which the master-key will not unlock. It is the conviction of intellectualism that this is because the maker of the key has missed them, and so left them out of account in fashioning it; while anti-intellectualism believes it is an illusion to see the situation as a case of locks to be turned by a key, at all. Entrance into possession of reality is otherwise conditioned, altogether; the procedure, in consequence, is radically different from this. But it is, I think, a true historical generalization that the success with which a philosopher, of whatever method, avoids a supreme principle of interpretation, corresponds exactly with the success with which he avoids being a philosopher at all. I suppose Omar Khayyam and Aristippus the Cyrenaic

3. Cf. R. B. Perry's *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, the first two sections of Chapter XI.

are two of the least unifying philosophers of history; yet their philosophy, like that of any absolutist, can be resumed in a single idea. Omar has uttered it in one of his own famous sentences: "Oh take the cash, and let the credit go!"

Aside from the presence, in each, of a generative principle, there is little enough in common between the anti-intellectualism of Omar and that of Henri Bergson. If critics have been able to find seeds of skepticism and of pessimism in Bergson,⁴ these characters are at any rate foreign to any intention visible in its author. No more positive philosophy, in its intention, was ever composed. The positiveness of its name, intuitionism, is altogether proper. Its significance, to be sure, is sharply defined by its negative relation to intellectualism, and therefore I stated it negatively above as the thesis that the parts of reality are not connected in a thinkable way. But the intuitionist would readily admit: if not in a thinkable way, then in no way, evidently. And, again, if not connected at all, no more are the parts of reality disconnected, since any disconnection between things is only their particular mode of connection. The fact is, reality has no parts, and that is just why intellect, which sees parts in everything, is alien and blind to the true nature of reality. Still one may object that intellect is itself a fact. What possible meaning can there be in saying that any fact is alien to reality? As Bergson himself has said, we swim in reality, and cannot possibly get clear of it. We cannot talk, we cannot think, we cannot act about nothing.

The answer to this objection is the master principle of Bergson's metaphysics: reality is life. Knowledge is "sympathetic" living. If intellect is real, so is every abstraction, *e. g.*, the inside of your hat. The inside and the hat itself are at any rate real in senses so importantly different that "real" and "unreal" hardly exaggerate the contrast. Intellect, says Bergson, is the cross-sectioning of reality. There is no thickness, no concreteness in it. It exists as much in inert matter as in consciousness; in fact, it exists in neither except in the sense in which a surface can be said to exist in a solid body. What is the surface *in itself*? Why, nothing; it is an abstract aspect of the body. The body is real,

4. J. W. Scott, *Pessimism of Bergson*, *Hibbert Journal*, XI, 99-116. See also below p. 94.

but its aspects are not real, because they do not constitute the body—no multiplication or addition of them does so. No millions of surfaces make any thickness. In this sense the surface is other than and alien to the real nature of the body. And so other manifestations of intellect—space, juxtaposition, extension, number, part out of part—have no existence, as the surface has none.

As facts, nevertheless, what are they? How are they facts? What is their *raison d'être*? Their *raison d'être* is a faculty life has, the faculty of *action*. They are the ways in which life acts. They are not concrete entities. In this, they are alien to the concreteness of reality. Try to reconstruct reality out of such abstractions, and the result is a construction like that of geometrical imagination. You have constructed an abstract symbol of the reality, which symbol the mind, preoccupied with its practical bias, can mistake for the reality only because it is so preoccupied.

When we physically take apart and put together, our manual activity has the same unreality of abstractness as that of our intellectual analyses and syntheses. It is the latter outwardly expressed, intellect externalized. Wherever we find life, we are experiencing reality. But when this occurs, we are never analyzing nor synthesizing. The more one divests himself of practical bias, and regards his object not as an object for the realization of any possible activity of his own, but as it is in itself—in proportion, that is, as one gets its character as a case of life—those unreal, spatial aspects of it yield to an aspect which has nothing in common with them. The parts of an anatomical model, a *papier maché* manikin, you may separate and put together again. An organism, as such, a manifestation of life, could not be dissected and recomposed in its living reality. What is it that makes an organism alive, a true reality? This, that every so-called part has a function which is so essential to the true function of the whole that one is present or absent with the other. They coincide. How, then, could you possibly dissect out a part of an organism? Once recognize, what is unquestionable, that any function of it coincides in this way with the function of the whole, and your analyzing operation is prevented absolutely. Obey the rule that everything which contributes at all to the function of the part shall be taken, and everything else left, and you are in Shylock's position after Portia's judgment: if you want the flesh you will

have to take blood with it; but you are not entitled to the blood. It is even more hopeless than that. It is not a matter of skill with your hand. You cannot make the analysis mentally, intellectually. It is not a matter of impairing or destroying the function, of injuring or killing the organism. You cannot *begin* the operation, not even on the corpse. The first incision separates cells whose functions were inseparably one, for there is no cell in the body that is not in organic union with every other cell.

If there is nothing of the nature of mosaic composition in the living structure, this fact is one with the fact that there is nothing mechanical in its functioning. It is not actuated from without, as every machine is actuated which is not alive; nor is its functioning, like that of such machines, an assemblage of functions predetermined so far as the machine itself is concerned—predetermined, that is to say, except for intervention from without; unalterable, as unstartable, without external cause. The character of living function is suggested by the word "focalization." There is a perfectly indivisible concert of function throughout the organism, in every one of its infinite varieties of activity. When the engineer reverses his engine, or otherwise alters its mode of operation, what he really does is to alter the structure of the machinery. The machinery has been specially constructed with a view to unmaking and remaking its nature more or less quickly and conveniently; that is, its parts can be displaced and replaced with reference to each other. Some parts are "thrown out of gear" and shifted back. *And then everything returns to its former state.* Not so in life. The functioning of an organism never remains quite the same in two consecutive instants. There is an incessantly moving emphasis or focus in it. Now one of its potentialities of function is primary or focal, now another. But none can ever cease and then be resumed. In this case, to cease is not to be thrown out of gear, but to die, to perish, to be annihilated. In every phase of the life activity of the organism, all its functions are operative, subsidiary and subservient in varying degrees to that one which for the moment is the focus of all. Thus the organic or vital focus, in its physiological aspect of activity and in its psychological aspect of attention, is never at rest. The modulation is not like the sudden transformations in a kaleidoscope. The evolutions do not take place in the manner suggested by the phrase "Presto, change!" *Modulation* is the

word that describes the process. Or, as Bergson phrases it, the change is continuous, incessant, an *interpenetrating flow* of processes, in which analysis can make no beginning and no separation; in which analysis, in fact, is absolutely impotent. If the eye is that which sees, the ear that which hears, and so on, it is really the organism entire, and no special, locally differentiated part of it that is the organ. Those so-called parts which, with our false intellectualism, we name the eye or other organ, are, *in their reality*, focal aspects of the entire organism, the organism seen with a certain restriction or limitation of interest.

But, now, how can one make any discourse about, say, an animal organism—indeed, how can this become an object of perception at all—without its lending itself to that sort of division into real parts which Bergson says is an intellectual falsification of its true nature, and therefore not true knowledge of the thing? When I look at a living body, do I not see it occupying space? Is it not, then, measurable? Is not one such body larger than another? Suppose cutting out parts of a body does alter or kill the organism: they can, nevertheless, be cut out, and are therefore parts? If, after, and because of, being cut out, they are then not parts of the *organism* from which they were cut, still, they are constituents of its volume. Surely, our ordinary speech about this part and that part of our bodies, is not all false?

Bergson's answer is uncompromising: our ordinary perception and speech does falsify the nature of reality, but (in spite of the apparent paradox) *does not mislead*. For our ordinary perception and speech have nothing to do with knowing. Perception is a different function of life—it is action. Our percepts are the ways in which reality can factor in our activities. Those dissected organs, you say, are at least so much of the entire volume of the organism: but the words are no sooner spoken than their falseness shows itself. If the organism ever had volume, it certainly has not, now—neither volume nor anything else. The fact is, the only meaning there is in its ever possessing volume while it still exists, is just that you might enter into activity with it in such and such ways—as that, for instance, of hacking it up. Perception, our “virtual” or potential activity on reality, is an abstract aspect of it; what it is in itself is another matter, and the only knowledge of this is that sympathetic union with it in which space and parts disappear in an “interpenetrating flow”

not of *things* nor of parts, but of process, of ceaseless change. Now, quality is just the fact of change, as anyone may test for himself by introspection. Reality as it is in itself, therefore, the true nature of reality, is quality. Relations are external views or aspects, no multiplication of which makes any start at constituting a concrete reality.

There is one more reflection on Bergson's account of intellect, which, like those made above, he anticipates and tries to meet, so far as it seems an objection to denying cognitive validity to intellect. The attempt at this point, however, is not very convincing. The point I mean is this: The ways in which reality can factor in my activities are *by that warrant* true characters of reality. One may cheerfully add: even as the inside of my hat is, after all, a true character of my hat. For, if reality were different, it could not factor *so* in my activity—in other words, which would also be the words of plain common sense, I should *perceive* it differently, on Bergson's own conception of what it means to perceive. The situation is this: Reality does, indeed, possess those interesting aspects of changing process and undividedness which Bergson is so preoccupied with and which he has brought to light with exquisite skill. This is one of two equally important truths about reality. The other Bergson is simply blind to, and that is that reality also possesses an aspect of permanence and divisibility. Does this seem a contradiction? It is no more a contradiction than that a curve is both convex and concave. It is not only not a contradiction: each of these antipodally opposite aspects of reality is absolutely indispensable to the very conception of the other, just as concavity is indispensable to the conception of convexity, east to the conception of west, right to the conception of left—and *vice versa*. This point is resumed below (pp. 77-9, 96). The object in view at present is to see how the philosopher's method is really his primary doctrine, in which object I am not in controversy with anyone, so far as I know; but also to see how an anti-intellectualist method depends upon a purely arbitrary, or rather constitutional, psychological prepossession for a certain emphasis of living.

I said that Bergson is entirely awake to the aptness of the objection just raised to his account of intellect. In a sense, in certain passages, he even seems to grant the truth of the con-

tention. Action, he acknowledges, for instance,⁵ can be involved only with reality; and consequently the forms of perception and the categories of intellect (which are those forms rendered elaborately precise) "touch something of the absolute." Sound truth, assuredly! The fitness of reality to enter as object into those active relationships which are the perceptive and intellectual categories makes the categories as genuinely own to the true, essential nature of objective reality as to the nature of subjective intelligence. That the categorization of reality depends on the real object's being in relation to something else than itself is nothing peculiar to this (the categorical) character of reality. The same condition is common to every character of reality. The qualitative aspect of reality, which Bergson usually regards as the nature of reality "in itself," depends no less than its relational or categorical aspect on the relatedness of the object. For the qualities of things are nothing but the differences they make—to consciousness or to other things. Reality not in relation is simply a phrase without a vestige of meaning. Reality "in itself" in such a sense is merely nonsense. It would seem, therefore, as if Bergson should account the intellectual mode of consciousness, which does indeed "touch something of the absolute," as knowledge of precisely the same metaphysical status as a mode which touches anything else of the absolute. It is one thing for a mode of consciousness to be uncongenial or uninteresting to you or me; it is another for it to be invalid. The uncongeniality of a mode of consciousness depends on personal idiosyncrasy; the invalidity of a mode of consciousness depends on the logical nature of being.

As a fact, however, perhaps because this preference between two aspects of the nature of reality depends so obviously on personal bias instead of logical principles, Bergson vacillates, in a hopelessly confused and confusing way, all through his writings, between two conceptions of reality. First, reality is of one nature, namely life, which is pure quality, change, or duration (the four terms are actually synonyms to Bergson), and knowledge of which can be only sympathetic intuition of it, while intellect is merely "an appendage of action," and not knowledge at all. In the other conception reality is cleft into a dualism more unutterably

5. *Creative Evolution*, p. xi.

absolute than that of Descartes. Life is one kind of reality; inert matter is the other. Intuition knows the former; intellect really does *know* the latter ('touching something of the absolute'), and knowledge is therefore not intuition only. Although this vacillation confuses issues in every one of Bergson's books, the first conception is more characteristic, upon the whole, of *Time and Free Will* and of *Creative Evolution*; the other conception is pretty consistently expounded in *Matter and Memory*. The sphere of intellect is restricted; its cognitive validity is not explicitly denied within this sphere, but only within the domain of life.

~~To be sure, since life exhausts reality, the sphere allotted to intellect is not real, which would seem to imply that intellect fails to know. The validity of intellectual consciousness is thus, in effect, denied equally in either case. The only difference is that the denial is conscious and explicit in one case, more or less unconsciously implied in the other.~~

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CHAPTER III

THE ANCIENT PREJUDICE AGAINST ANALYSIS

The restrictive conception of intellect is a very old one. The incompatibility of intellect and life, as cognitive organ and object, is certainly as old a belief as the era of the Sophists. It can be said, that is, with historical certainty, that, from the time of Protagoras—and I have no doubt it has been true ever since the first philosopher, whoever he was, undertook to make an examination of the universe as one thing—it has always been true that many of the best minds have been convinced, by the futile results of such undertakings, that the universe as one thing, on one hand, and intellect, on the other, make a pair as incompatible, in the relation of cognitive organ and object, as the faint star and the fovea: you have an organ and an object which by nature are unsuited to each other. That kind of organ cannot see that kind of object. Not that the faint star is invisible, but, to see it, you musn't look! Then it will swim into the field of the organ that is made to see it, the retinal tissue surrounding the fovea. Thus it is not a question of human finitude or limitation. The formulæ of intellect, applied to such an object, are mere silliness, reducible, as Kant showed, to all manner of antinomy and paradox. Not only that, but whatever is most important and interesting within this whole, everything concerning the nature and meaning of concrete cases of life, eludes and baffles conceptual statement,—which is the only kind of statement there is,—inevitably eludes it, like smoke in a child's hand who tries to catch it. Your essences or definitions, of life or any of its manifestations, are stuff and nonsense, not inadequate, but absurd. What logical sentence has ever been uttered that, upon the least reflection, does not fail to develop into a grotesquely false cari-

cature when applied to any genuine phase or interest of life, great or small—whether God, freedom, immortality, or the heart of a woman, or of a child, or of a man (to take them in a descending order of their unsearchableness)? You may labor your conception with prodigious precision—the truth of the matter is always beyond, when you are speaking of matters that are real.

This is the artist's temper of mind when the artist has inadvertently gulped down a noxious dose of metaphysics. It is the feeling of the novelists, the dramatists, the poets, that Bergson voices: life may be lived—nobly or basely, courageously or cowardly, truly or falsely;—and the flavor and significance of life may be heightened, life may be realized more abundantly, in artistic activity, which is putting oneself into one's object, making it become not an object, indentifying oneself with it. But one thing is not given to man, and that is to *interpret* life.

Everyone is familiar with the telling dramatic force of the device which consists in involving a philosophical hero, a man addicted to principles of high generality, in sudden overwhelming emotional chaos, in which all his philosophy goes to smash. The refractoriness of sexual love, for instance, to all his theories is such a delicious *reductio ad absurdum* of the theories. First you make your philosopher develop his maxims, in a besotted, fatuous conviction of their infallibility; then a particularly impossible she enters, one who is conspicuously unfitted, by artlessness or disabilities of worldly station, for the upsetting of principles great and high. The philosopher goes through his paces, eating his maxims whole, with unction; and you have the spectacle of Life rising serene, untouched, above the futilities of theory. The theory doesn't work. The obvious conclusion is that there is some fundamental incommensurability between it and the simple facts of life that can flout it so. *Simon the Jester* is a very delightful example of what I mean. Simon is bound to come to grief, he is so smugly philosophical. The wise novel-reader knows what to expect. Not that philosophy is not an ornament to a man, a civilizing, disciplining exercise. All that is one thing, but acting as if such notions *apply* is quite another. This good philosophical chap gives the result of his philosophy in regulating his life, as follows:

"Surely no man has fought harder than I have done to convince himself of the deadly seriousness of existence; and surely

before the feet of no man has Destiny cast such stumbling-blocks to faith. . . . No matter what I do, I'm baffled. I look upon sorrow and say, 'Lo, this is tragedy!' and hey, presto! a trick of lightening turns it into farce. I cry aloud, in perfervid zeal, 'Life is real, life is earnest, and the apotheosis of the fantastic is not its goal,' and immediately a grinning irony comes to give the lie to my *credo*.

"Or is it that, by inscrutable decree of the Almighty Powers, I am undergoing punishment for an old unregenerate point of view, being doomed to wear my detested motley for all eternity, to stretch out my hand forever to grasp realities and find I can do naught but beat the air with my bladder; to listen with strained ear perpetually expectant of the music of the spheres, and catch nothing but the mocking jingle of the bells on my fool's cap?

"I don't know. I give it up."

Giving it up is obviously the moral, here. The change of attitude implied in the last words marks the beginning of an era of glorious fulfilment of life in the former philosopher's history. What was necessary was that he should stop theorizing and learn to live. That is, philosophy, as supreme experience, is the art of living. It is the artist that really knows, that knows inwardly and truly. The genuine philosopher is the artist in living. The intellectualist philosopher is a dissector of life's defunct remains.

The nature of the opposition between the two modes of consciousness called intuition and intellect is discussed in the chapter on Bergson's epistemology. The intuitionist philosopher is such never for logical reasons, always for temperamental reasons. He is a man to whom life is richer and fuller, more self-fulfilling, more natural, in the intuitional mode of consciousness than in the intellectual. Hence the suspicious and disparaging disposition toward the intellectual mode of consciousness, in a very numerous class of minds of the highest order. From a personal feeling of safety and security in intuition and of dissatisfaction with intellectual efforts, the transition is natural to a conviction that the trouble is in the essential nature of intellect. A mode of consciousness which is so inveterately and (presumably) inevitably beset with self-frustration cannot be knowledge. It is too obviously the opposite of knowledge, to wit error and delusion.

But once the opposition has reached this point, where not only the convenience but the very validity of intellect is impugned,

one is involved in a disjunction between these two modes of consciousness that is demonstrably false, both logically and psychologically. It is surely a false hypostasis of terms whose distinction is merely abstract, to set over against each other in this way two aspects which are equally essential to any conception of the nature of consciousness. For intuition and intellect can be seen to imply each other with the same necessity with which quality and quantity imply each other. And there is the same absurdity, on the side of epistemology, in regarding intuition as valid knowledge and intellect as not valid, as, on the side of ontology, in regarding quality as real and quantity—or relation in general—as not real. As if either were conceivable except as a co-aspect or coefficient with the other, in the nature of reality. This would be to conceive of quality as quality of nothing, or relation as relation between no terms.

If philosophy must be reflective (and reflectiveness to some degree is undoubtedly an inevitable condition of human consciousness, perhaps of any consciousness), it must be, *quatenus* philosophy, intellectual, and not, *quatenus* philosophy, intuitional. Intuition will assuredly be there, in any philosophy, as the pole is inseparable from its antipodes. But the philosophicalness of philosophy is just its reflectiveness; that is, once more, *quatenus* philosophy, it is intellectual.

I am recording a protest against false reification of what is abstract, the very fault which intuitionism is insistent to lay to the charge of intellectualism. If intuitionism were to conceptualize intuition and intellect, instead of reifying them, it could not appropriate validity to either mode of consciousness and deny it to another. The satisfactoriness and richness of a given mode of consciousness depend no doubt on the constitution of the subject. The validity of consciousness in any mode has nothing to do with such personal idiosyncrasy.

James is less rigorous concerning the validity of relational knowledge than Bergson. Having found relations in the immediate content of conscious data, James cannot deny them an essential constitutiveness in the nature of reality. But such knowledge is "thin" and "poor", in his homely and human phraseology. This is only a more naïve and genial expression than Bergson's of the purely eulogistic primacy of quality over relation. Relations are thin and poor aspects of reality, no doubt,

if you find them so. Otherwise they may be supremely interesting. That depends on your interests, which depend on your constitution. In any case, they are the aspect of reality primarily indispensable to reflective thought, which is philosophy.

The characteristic which is most sedulously imputed by the philosophy of instinct to intellect is usefulness, but this characteristic is treated as evidence of cognitive invalidity! In point of fact, serviceableness to action in no way distinguishes intellect from instinct. Each alike is a reactive state resulting in a new situation, a new arrangement of matter; and the only thing that can give true finality to the intelligent act is the affective value of the conscious state arising out of this new situation. But the same is true of the situation which is the outcome of the instinctive act.

The distinction sometimes seems to mean that it is only acquaintance with objects (intuitive knowledge of them) that has affective value, and that this kind of consciousness is therefore an end in itself in a sense in which intellect is not. For knowledge about the object (intellectual knowledge of it) will then be supposed to have no affective value in itself, but only as it may subserve action upon the object, which action will be accompanied by acquaintance with the object. But if knowledge about an object subserves acquaintance with it, the converse is no less true. If knowledge of the location and price of a tennis ball subserves my use of it and acquaintance with it, the latter in turn subserves my knowledge about it in an indefinite number of respects. True, acquaintance with an object may not always lead to knowledge about it so obviously as in the case of the tennis ball; but again it is equally true that knowledge about certain things, for instance lines drawn upon the blackboard, has no obvious leading toward utility; the utility of a certain mathematical equation may seem quite inscrutable. But how obvious the leading may be, or how interesting the utility, is nothing to the point. The question whether or not the connection is necessarily there in all cases is answered peremptorily *a priori* by the polar character of knowledge by virtue of which acquaintance-with is only an aspect of knowledge-about, and *vice versa*.

It is flagrantly untrue, as a fact, that knowledge-about is without affective value in itself. Experience is as emphatic to the

contrary as reason. If a characteristically intellectual state of mind gives you less satisfaction, or more, than one that is characteristically intuitive, the reason is quite personal and accidental in either case. It may just as well give you more as less. Being knowledge in each case, awareness at least, it has its affective value in some degree necessarily, of whichever character it may be predominantly.

Since relation is not divorcible from quality, nor intellect from intuition, it results that, if the artist blunders through critical defect, even better art would, of itself, have saved him in spite of his critical defect. If the mustiness of the philosopher is expressible as lack of a facile instinct, merely a truer theory of life would have corrected him. No doubt life is too intricate for the most robust capacity for ratiocination. Sanity balances securely between the two biases of consciousness. Art and criticism are equally long, and the middle course a short-cut and an economy of living. But condemnation of the validity of consciousness in any mode is a theoretical proposition irrelevant to maxims of practical sagacity. And it implies either condemning the validity of all consciousness (if intuition and intellect are aspects of each other) or else it presupposes that reality is not categorical, which Bergson fails to show. On page 24 of the present essay, we have seen that he seems, in an inconsistent way, even to maintain the contradictory thesis.

In a former paper⁶ I have written as follows:

"Now, Bergson's idea of the philosopher—an artist in life—is probably no one's else. He is of that opinion, decidedly; a considerable part of the book [*Creative Evolution*] is a demonstration that actual philosophers, from Plato on, are intellectualists all, dissectors, not artists. But if Bergson's enterprise is to be a *substitute* for philosophy and appropriate its name, we who are much addicted to the old enterprise will be careful to know why it is futile and illusory."

Monsieur Bergson comments on this in a private letter from which I translate:

"It would be so, I recognize, if these intellectualist philosophers had been philosophers only in virtue of their intellectualism. But

6. *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Volume V, No. 22

whereas intelligence pure and simple professes to solve the problems, it is intuition alone that has enabled them to be put. Without the intuitive feeling of our freedom, there would be no problem of freedom, hence no determinist theory; thus, the different forms of determinism, which are so many forms of intellectualism, owe their very existence to something which could not have been obtained by the intellectualist method. For my part, I find, more or less developed, the seeds of intuitionism in most of the great philosophic doctrines, although the philosophers have always tried to convert their intuition into dialectic. Yet it is chiefly in the former that they have been philosophers."

This seems to me an absolute inversion of intuition and intellect. Does intuition 'put problems'? It is, certainly, intuition that gives us the material of our problems. But the formulating of a problem—what can be meant by intuition's formulating anything? Giving forms, I should say, just defines the work of intellect. Intuition gives us our facts, our material. Surely, the putting of problems is an intellectual operation continuous, even identical, strictly, with their solution? A problem well put is rather more than half solved. Certainly the remainder of the solution is not a different order of activity. It carries out the 'putting' in its implications. A problem put is only a problem incompletely solved.⁷ Solving it is putting it with a satisfactory perspicacity.

Without the intuitive feeling of our freedom there would be no problem of freedom, certainly, but you might easily have the intuition without the problem. In the preface to the *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, Bergson insists that it is the aberrations of intellect that give rise to the problems of freedom. Intellect, then, at any rate, not intuition, puts the problem.

As correlative modes of consciousness, neither is independent, nor primary, of course. Even in the putting of our problems, intellect is only a co-factor, a coefficient with intuition. And in the most abstract reasoning, the intuitive coefficient of thought is indispensable. So far as intellect is actual, concrete knowledge, it must be intuitively correlated, and so far as intuition is the real intuiting of anything, it must be intelligently correlated.

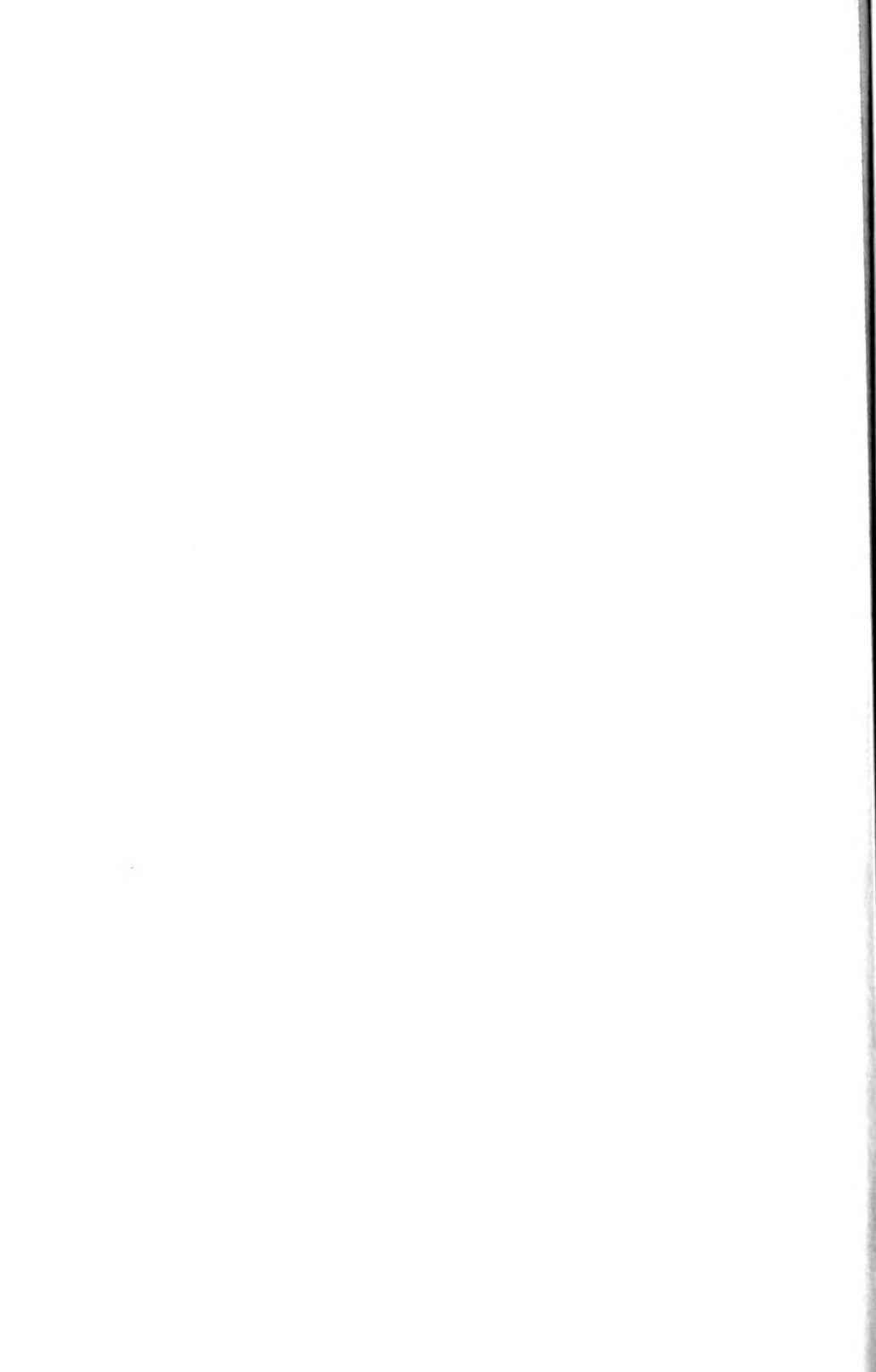
In what respect are the philosophers of whom Monsieur Bergson

7. Cf. the second sentence of the present essay.

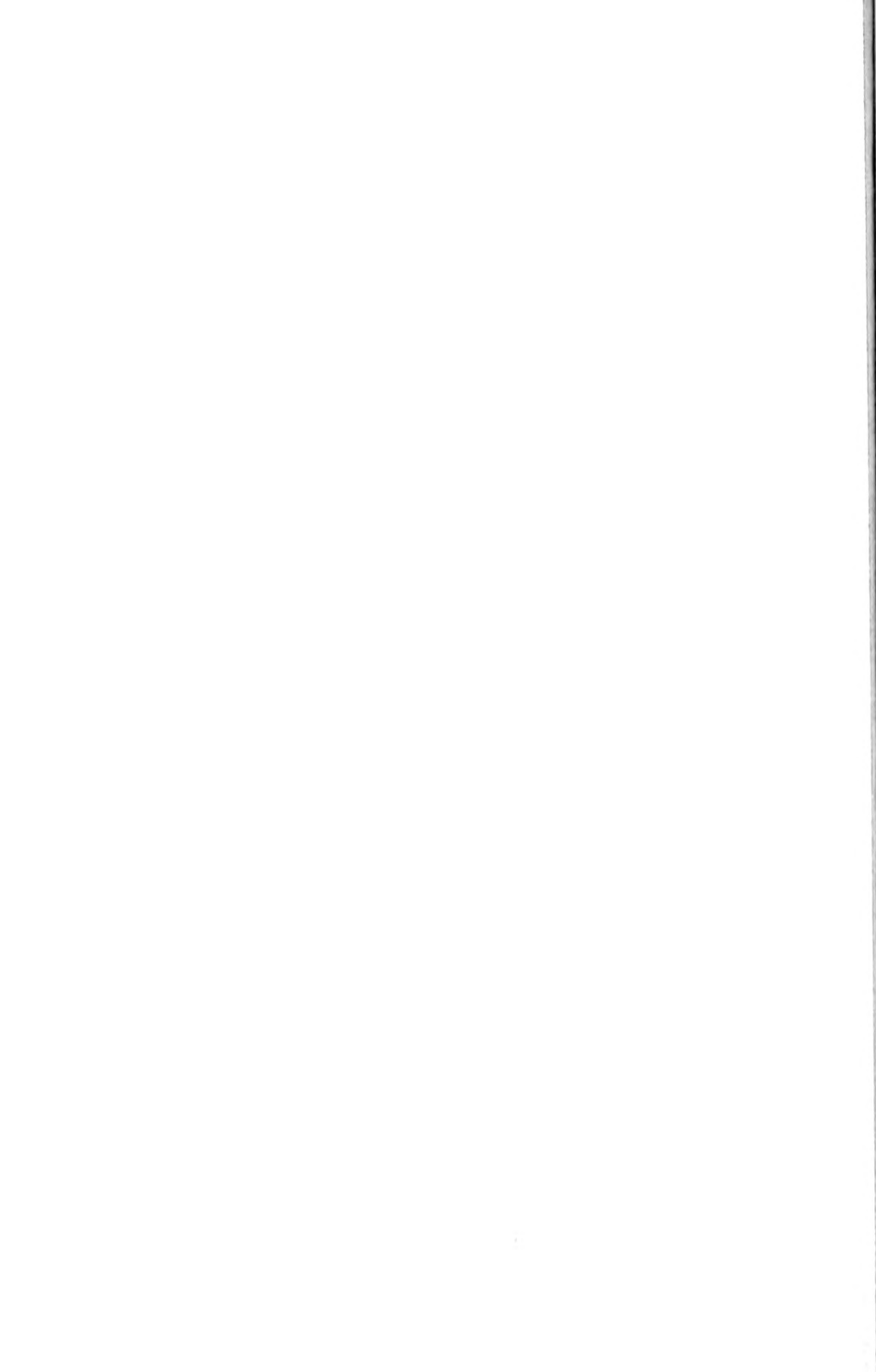
speaks intuitionists? Does this mean anything more than that they are wide-reaching and far-reaching instead of narrow and dull in their apprehension? Is not philosophy interpretation of experience? Is not the philosopher's vision, therefore, always necessarily, just so far as he is a *philosopher*, a vision of the formal aspect of reality? To be sure, that is just what Monsieur Bergson is denying. But his reason is that reality is pure quality, a proposition whose logical faultiness and temperamental genesis I have sufficiently noted.

In view of the temperamental basis of the artistic and the philosophical or critical attitudes, it were fatuous for either to propose a reform in the other by way of conformity to a mode distinguished from it thus radically. It is this fatuity which it seems to me Bergson commits in regarding the success of any philosophy as due, by any possibility, to its becoming art instead. As well conceive that the virtue of an artistic product *consists* in its conformity to critical canons.

Philosophy that is false to art would therein necessarily be false to philosophy; and art that is false to philosophy is false to art; but art is not philosophy, nor philosophy art.



PART TWO
BERGSON'S SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE



CHAPTER I

ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

My reason for coupling these two subjects in one heading is suggested by the following words quoted from the Introduction to *Creative Evolution*: “. . . *theory of knowledge and theory of life* seem to us inseparable.” For Bergson, reality is life; and knowledge, of course, is a function of life. “The fundamental character of Bergson’s philosophy,” writes H. Wildon Carr,⁸ “is . . . to emphasize the primary importance of the conception of life as giving the key to the nature of knowledge.”

All the essential principles of this metaphysics are contained in the first of Bergson’s philosophical books, *Time and Free Will*.⁹ The two later books, *Matter and Memory* and *Creative Evolution*, have not modified it, and have hardly even developed it—in the sense, that is, that no vital corrections or additions to the principles of the *Essai* have been made.

In discussing anti-intellectualistic philosophies, in the first part of the present essay, their suspicion and distrust of intellect was attributed to a logical illusion. The philosopher, finding life preeminently satisfactory in an intimate acquaintance with the qualitative aspect of experience, acquires an instinctive faith in the preeminent reality of quality, a faith which is the deepest root of his being. Now, this faith is absolutely justified, of course. It is only necessary that it should be understood. Illusion and error enter in with the neglect of the very preeminence of this character of reality. For evidently nothing can be pre-

8. *Henri Bergson: The Philosophy of Change*, p. 14.

9. This title has been given to the English translation of the *Essai sur les données*, etc.

eminently real and at the same time real in any sense for which the adverb "preeminently" is either false or meaningless. The sense of "important" is a well accredited, proper meaning, in our language, of the word "real." But it is a sense perfectly distinct from the metaphysical sense. Teleologically, anything is preeminently real *according to circumstances*. Teleologically, "real" is a synonym of "important," a relative term capable of degree. Metaphysically, circumstances are irrelevant to the realness of anything. This is a different statement from the statement that circumstances are irrelevant to the *nature* of anything. It may be that there is nothing whose nature can be independent of, wholly undetermined by, circumstances. That is another question. We have nothing to do with it at present. For in either case, circumstances make it neither more nor less real. Metaphysically, then, "real" is an absolute term, incapable of degree, and the adverb "preeminently" has no meaning when applied to it. The very fitness of the adverb "preeminently" to the intuitionist's meaning of the realness of quality determines this meaning as a teleological eulogism, and the ultimate significance of intuitionism is not the germination of a logical principle, but an instinctive propagandism in the direction of a favorite emphasis of living, an enthusiasm which has become involved in a logical illusion concerning its own foundation in the nature of things, an illusion which is clearly traceable, on analysis, to this ambiguity in the use of the word "real."

Later in this study it will appear that Bergson's interest centers, as the interest of French philosophy has centered ever since the Renaissance, in the problem of freedom. No doubt that very enthusiasm which motivates modern anti-intellectualism and gives it so positive a character, is a prime factor in its popular success. And in the case of Bergson, both the significance of his philosophy itself and the brilliant vogue it has achieved can be rightly appreciated only in the light of this central passion whose appeal to human nature is so universal and so profound. Anti-intellectualism and anti-determinism are one and the same thing. It will appear as we go on that a deep-lying tychism, a horror of determinism, is the specific trait of that motive (described above as a natural affinity for the qualitative aspect of reality, as distinguished from its relational aspect) which strenuously endeavors, in Bergson, to eliminate relation from reality,

judgment from knowledge. He protests that freedom cannot be defined without converting it into necessity; for definition is determination. A would-be indeterminist *theory* of will is as futile as a determinist theory is false: on any *theory*, will is pre-judged in favor of determinism. The nature of freedom cannot be known independently of the nature of will, and then attributed or denied to will, as one might attribute or deny redness to an apple. To say, Will is free, would be like saying, Will is voluntary, or, Freedom is free—not, indeed, an untruth, but without meaning and hence not a truth, either.

The one way, then, of getting the true nature of will truly comprehended which is doomed to necessary failure, is to write a psychological treatise on the subject. For, since will has no such determinate character as intellect finds in it or gives to it, a treatise conveying the true nature of will would have to be unintelligible! Now, see in will, as Leibniz¹⁰ and Schopenhauer, as well as Bergson, have seen in it, the whole of life and of reality, and you see how it is Bergson's tychism that constitutes the specific motive for his anti-intellectualism, and how this so-called method forms, in his philosophy, the supreme doctrine which is the objective of all his discourse.

Bergson's critique of intellectualism proceeds by applying to

10. Possibly this representation of Leibniz's thought requires a word of explanation. Leibniz expresses the nature of reality in terms of force, on one hand, and of consciousness on the other. The monad or elemental reality is a unit of perception and also a unit of force. It is a living unit; as in Bergsonism, reality is life, though life in Leibniz's philosophy is ultimately plural instead of a simple impetus. It is true that will is not a characteristic Leibnizian term, but existence is always, I think, conceived by him very clearly as *conation*. The self-realization of the monad is at the same time an intensification of its perceptiveness and of its dynamic. Cf. the following passages from Rogers' *Student's History of Philosophy*, pp. 307-8: "Leibniz was led by various motives to substitute, for extension, *power of resistance*, as the essential quality of matter. . . . But when, instead of extension, we characterize matter as *force*, a means of connection [between matter and mind] is opened up. For force has its analogue in the conscious life; corresponding to the activity of matter is conscious activity or will. Indeed, are there any positive terms in which we can describe the nature of force, unless we conceive it as identical with that conscious activity which we know directly in ourselves?" This activity, then, "is at bottom, when we interpret it, a spiritual or perceptual activity." In short, it is will.

Leibniz is properly regarded as the first modern spiritualist. Leibnizian matter is real, if you like, but then it is continuous, and of essentially identical nature, with spirit. Matter is spirit in a low stage of development. Bergson has no such clear and unambiguous conception of matter as this, when you consider the whole of his doctrine; but there are passages in Bergson which might almost have been written by Leibniz himself. For instance: . . . "if, in fact, the humblest function of spirit is to bind together the successive moments of the duration of things, if it is by this that it comes into contact with matter and by this also that it is first of all distinguished from matter, we can conceive an infinite number of degrees between matter and fully developed spirit—a spirit capable of action which is not only undetermined, but also reasonable and reflective." (*Matter and Memory*, pp. 295-6.)

traditional metaphysics and epistemology his purely qualitative criterion of reality. Whether science, the product of intelligence, is physical, biological, or psychological, it is knowledge-about, and not acquaintance-with; its object is relation, and not reality; its objective is action, and not vision; its organ is intelligence, not instinct. But the object of philosophy is reality; its objective is vision; its organ instinct. The timeless, intellectual way in which science knows about, but never knows, is not the way of true philosophy. The philosopher, to know reality, must achieve a vital, sympathetic concurrence with its flow. To be known, reality must be lived, not thought'. In *Creative Evolution* Bergson traces the genesis of instinct and intelligence to a primitive tendency, effort or spring of life (the *élan vital*) whose path bifurcates indefinitely in the course of its evolution. These elementary tendencies, instinct and intelligence, having issued from the same primitive tendency, are both present, at least in rudiment, in all forms of life; and it is the presence, though in a suppressed state, of instinct in man that must save philosophy from the *cognitive emptiness* of science, and give it a hold on the living fullness of reality.

In *Time and Free Will* the theory of "real duration," which is a synonym for intuition, and for life, and for reality, and is the foundation of the Bergsonian philosophy, is enunciated, and in the light of it intellect is shown to falsify the nature of consciousness in applying to conscious states such categories as magnitude, plurality, causation. Each of these categories, in its traditional application, is a quantifying and a spatializing of consciousness. The intensity of a conscious state is nothing but the state itself; the state is pure quality or heterogeneity, incapable of measure and degree. The variousness of conscious states has no analogy with plurality. Plurality is simultaneity and juxtaposition; but conscious states prolong each other in an interpenetrating flow. Finally, the organization of conscious states is nothing like the traditional systematic "coördination" of associationistic psychology. It does not lend itself to laws and principles. It cannot be adequately expressed by words, nor artificially reconstructed by a juxtaposition of simple states, for it is always an absolutely new and original phase of our duration, and is itself a simple thing.

The first chapter of *Time and Free Will* consists of analyses of

all sorts of psychological states, in order to justify the above thesis concerning intensity. They are masterly analyses, and their interest for psychology is great. So far as Bergson's object is concerned, of showing how intellect falsifies the nature of consciousness in conceiving of sensations as *more* or *less* intense, what the chapter proves is no more than that whenever a conscious state varies—which every conscious state does continuously—it varies qualitatively. Which hardly needed to be proved. For the argument does not show that, along with the qualitative change, a quantitative change may not occur; that is, it does not exclude the proposition which Bergson is trying to refute, namely that there is something in the nature of a conscious state that is capable of increasing and decreasing.¹¹

In saying that conscious states are pure quality, Bergson means that when one compares a sensation, for instance, with another which is regarded as of the same "kind," but of greater or less intensity, both the sameness of kind and the difference of magnitude are illusions of intellect, due to attributing the category of magnitude, or quantity, to that whose nature admits of no such determination. A so-called more intense odor, say, it is mere nonsense to call *same* in any sense with another, supposed to be less intense. The two are distinguishable, that is all; they are not comparable, properly speaking. They are comparable in just the sense, and in no other (it would seem, from Bergson's treatment of the subject, although the statement is not his, explicitly) that either of the odors can be compared with a sound or a taste. The difference is not one of degree; it is what Bergson calls absolute.

But what, then, exactly, according to Bergson, do we mean when we compare psychic states as more or less intense? In simple states, he says, magnitude of cause is associated, by a thousand experiences, with a certain quality or shade of effect in consciousness, and the former is attributed to the latter. The quantitative scale rubs off color, so to speak, by the operation of association, from the material cause to the psychic effect. In complex states intensity means the amount of our inner life which the state in question colors with its own quality. A passion is deep and intense in the fact that the same objects no longer pro-

11. There is a good discussion of this point in an article reviewing the *Essai*, by L. Levy-Bruhl, in the *Revue Philosophique*, Vol. XXIX (1890), pp. 513-538.

duce the same impression. In this statement of the case of complex states it will be seen that Bergson fails to avoid attributing quantity to the inner life of consciousness, since the intensity of complex states is measured, by him, by a quantitative standard, the amount of that inner life colored or affected by the quality in question.

The attempt is equally hopeless whether the state in question be simple or complex. Bergson attempts, but fails,¹² to prove that magnitude is a character peculiar to space, and that homogeneity and space are two names for the same conception. Two odors, two sounds are *more* than one, however; and that homogeneity in them by virtue of which they are more, and two, is not space. Bergson would object that number itself, the twoness of the odors or sounds, is indeed a spatial attribute falsely imputed to them. They are not plural, in themselves; it is conceptualization that accounts for the plurality imputed to them. One evolves continuously, in the flow of consciousness, out of the other. It would be a sufficient answer that such a doctrine contradicts itself in every breath by the terms necessary to any utterance of it,—such terms as sounds, they, them, one, the other—all imputing to the objects of discussion the plurality which it tries to deny. And to fall back on the disabilities of language, due to its being the work of intellect, is only to declare one's philosophy ineffable. But not only ineffable—unthinkable. Yes, Bergson would admit, unthinkable in the narrow sense of conceptual thought, but not unknowable to immediate intuition. The final rejoinder, I think, is that immediacy is a vanishing-point, a limiting conception of the relation between subject and object, a phase of consciousness in which to use the mathematical analogy, the "coefficient" of consciousness vanishes into zero. We return later in this essay to the amplifying of this point.¹³ In brief, if there is no *distinction* between subject and object, there is no object (as, likewise, no subject, of course); hence, no truth; and Bergson could not have made these ineffable discoveries *about* the sounds and odors, for he could not have discovered themselves.

It is clear enough that nothing needs to *occupy* space, in order to be a magnitude. A line, which occupies no space, is even a *spatial*

12. Cf. below, pp. 57, 58.

13. Pages 72, 73, 97. Professor Perry's analysis of the conception of immediacy (*Present Philosophical Tendencies*, Chapter X) has a result that is similar in principle to the above.

magnitude, nevertheless. That it is spatial, Bergson would say, is just the fact that it is homogeneous. But is homogeneity the only character of a line, and is its spatiality *therefore* necessarily the same thing as its homogeneity? Evidently a line has a *quale* perfectly distinct from its homogeneity, and essential to its linear nature; that *quale* is its direction. If an interval of time, then, or a mental state, seems not to be spatial, this does not compel us to deny that there is any homogeneity about it: if the interval or the state of mind lacks the determination—the character of direction—which is indispensable to a line and to spatiality as such, this lack determines these objects of thought as non-spatial without the slightest detriment to their homogeneity. But all the evidence of homogeneity in space applies equally to homogeneity in time and consciousness. The evidence is their additiveness: all *seem* to present numerically distinct cases and quantitative differences. No logical ground has been indicated, for discrimination, in the validity of this seeming, as a warrant for the homogeneity of space and not of time and consciousness. Time and consciousness are homogeneous by the same warrant as space and matter.

I think it is not irrelevant to Bergson's theory of the associative transfer of quantity in the stimulus to the sensation, to observe that, in the stimulus, there is kind as well as amount. If the shade or quality of the sensation corresponds to the degree of the cause, is there no further determination of the sensation distinctively correlative with the kind of the cause? Such correlate seems indispensable to Bergson's, as to any, reactive conception of sensation, but, in Bergson's theory of intensity, it seems to be preempted for correlation with the aspect of quantity in the stimulus.

The case of plural odors and sounds, the case of the line, and an infinity of other cases prove that magnitude is intensive as well as extensive. The contradictory thesis, that of Bergson, reduces, at bottom, to the self-contradiction that consciousness discovers what is no object of consciousness.

In admitting that sensations are comparable in this sense, that two odors, for instance, regarded as of the same kind, can be compared with each other in the same way as either can be compared with a sound or a taste, Bergson evidently means that they can be distinguished as different; and he regards this as implying that

sensations are absolutely heterogeneous with each other, *absolutely* different. This phrase, I am sure, conceals a bald contradiction. It seems to mean a relation, namely difference, in which, however, the terms are absolute, that is not in relation. Difference cannot be so conceived. Difference, I submit, cannot be conceived without that (*common to the differing terms*) in respect of which they are different. Monsieur Bergson, therefore, in admitting that sensations are comparable in any sense, is still confronted with an element common to all sensations; he has still to eliminate the character of homogeneity from sensation, by virtue of which a purely subjective evaluation of their relative intensities is possible.

The root of the difficulty Monsieur Lévy-Bruhl has shown¹⁴ to be a reific separation of quantity and quality, which are separable in truth only by abstraction of attention. Real existence in absolute homogeneity or space, as Bergson represents the existence of the external world, is as unthinkable as real existence in absolute heterogeneity, which existence is consciousness or life, for Bergson. External things, he says, which do not lapse (*"ne durent pas"*), seem to us, nevertheless, to lapse like us because to each instant of our lapsing duration a new collective whole of those simultaneities which we call the universe corresponds. "Does this not imply," writes Lévy-Bruhl, "a preestablished harmony much more difficult to accept than that of Leibniz? Leibniz supposes a purely ideal concord between forces of the same nature. Monsieur Bergson asks us to admit an indefinite series of coincidences, for each instant, between 'a real duration, whose heterogeneous moments compenetrates,' and a space which, not lapsing, has no moments at all. Monsieur Bergson really places external reality, which does not lapse, in a sort of eternity. He ingeniously shows that everything in space may be treated as quantity and submitted to mathematics. Now, mathematical verities, expressing only relations between given magnitudes, are abstracted from real lapsing duration. All the laws reduce to analytical formulæ. But then they are, according to the saying of Bossuet, eternal verities, and how shall the real be distinguished from the possible?"

This sundering, in Bergson's theory of reality, of what rightly

14. *Op. cit.*, p. 525.

is one, is already implied, in his theory of knowledge, in the mutual exclusion of the two cognitive modes, intuition and conception. The predicaments into which philosophy falls in reasoning conceptually (and there is no other reasoning) about the subjective "world," are due, Bergson thinks, not to faults in the use of logic, but to an essential incongruity between the matter and the logical mode of being conscious of it. But such an essential incongruity between any mode of consciousness and what it is aware of would imply that the *modes* of consciousness, on the one hand, are *parts* of consciousness, of which accordingly, you can have one without the other (theoretically if not actually); and, on the other hand, there is the corresponding implication for ontology, that what consciousness is aware of is also composed of two parts, which match, respectively, the parts of consciousness. Divide consciousness into two parts, then divide what it is aware of into two parts; suppose that each of your parts of consciousness suits one, and not the other, of your two parts of what it is aware of—all this is necessary before there can be any possibility of incongruous mismatching between consciousness and being. Therefore uneasiness about this incongruity, the very motive of intuitionism, presupposes first the sharpest conceptual treatment of the subjective "world," and then the flagrant reification of the resulting abstractions. In other words, the indispensable precondition of dialectical defense of intuitionism is an intellectualism of the "vicious" type.

The first chapter of the *Essai* having criticized the application of magnitude to consciousness, and found that psychological intensity has nothing quantitative about it, the second chapter proceeds with an analogous criticism of number, and finds that psychological variousness has nothing plural about it. The multiplicity of material objects is number or plurality; the variousness of the facts of mind is nothing of the sort. Numerical multiplicity is distinct and objective, given or thought in space; subjective variousness is indistinct and compenetrating.

The medium of the facts of consciousness being lapsing duration, and not extension, they are never simultaneous in the same consciousness. But then they cannot be counted; to count is to have things together, simultaneously. That, again, is to have them in space. And that, finally, is to have them as objects.

Now, the essential nature of psychic facts is to be subjective and not objective. If, therefore, you find yourself counting facts within a consciousness, you are deluded; they cannot be what you take them for; they can only be (spatial) *objects*, symbols by which you are representing facts that are not objective,—because they are subjective!—and not spatial but temporal.

This statement of the case will satisfy few people as it stands. Professor Bergson is aware of this, and he will grant that such alleged facts of consciousness as you distinguish and count may be set in the medium of time rather than in space, if time, as well as space, is a homogeneous medium; but time so understood, he thinks, turns into space. And time is so understood very generally, without any doubt. When we speak of time, says Bergson, we are usually thinking of space; that is, we are thinking of a homogeneous medium, a medium, therefore, in which psychic states are aligned or juxtaposed, as things are in space, forming a distinct multiplicity.

This is, of course, another aspect of what Bergson regards as the same vice, conceptualism, that is discussed in the first chapter of the *Essai*. An intensive magnitude is a distinct concept, sharply bounded; all within is the concept, all without, its other. But no psychic fact is sharply bounded; it penetrates the whole consciousness. The whole consciousness is one with it. We work quantitatively with concepts, always, arithmetically and geometrically. But then we work in space, which is enough, says Bergson, to show that intensity applied to a psychic fact is not a magnitude, since psychic facts are not in space. So here, in the second chapter, the elements which one pretends to count and add *in time* are, in order to be counted and added—in order merely to be distinguished—distinct concepts. Then they are not in time but in space.

The application of intensive magnitude and of numerical multiplicity to psychic facts is thus the same fallacy in two aspects, the fallacy of conceptualism, the nature of which is to substitute space for time as the form of mental existence.

But Professor Bergson is not altogether dogmatic in saying that conceptual time is a spatialized symbol of real time. He goes on now to show how it is that the nature of real time is nothing like conceptual time. *Durée*, his name for real time, seems a bad term for such a use; for the essence of Bergson's "*durée*" is change, while duration in every other connection

means just the waiting or standing still of the flow of time. Some term like "lapse" seems nearer the idea.

The genetic or empirical theory of space perception regards the sensations by which we succeed in forming the notion of space as themselves unextended and purely qualitative; extension results from their synthesis, as water results from the combination of two elements. Bergson remarks that the fact that water is neither oxygen nor hydrogen nor merely both is just the fact that we embrace the multiplicity of atoms in a single apperception. Eliminate the mind which operates this synthesis and you will at the same time annihilate the water qualities so far as they are other than oxygen and hydrogen qualities; you will, that is, annihilate the aspect under which the synthesis of elementary parts is presented to our consciousness. For space to arise from the coexistence of non-spatial qualities, an act of the mind is necessary, embracing them all together and juxtaposing them—an act which is a Kantian *a priori* form of sensibility.

This act is the conception of an empty homogeneous medium. It is a principle of differentiation other than qualitative differentiation, enabling us to distinguish qualitatively identical simultaneous sensations. Without this principle, we should have perception of the extended, but we should not have conception of space. That is, simultaneous sensations are never absolutely identical, because the organic elements stimulated are not identical. There are no two points of a homogeneous surface that produce the same impression on sight and touch. So there is a real qualitative difference between any two simultaneous points. This, Bergson says, is enough to give us perception of the extended. But the conception of space is *en outre*. The higher one rises in the series of intelligent beings, the more clearly the independent idea of a homogeneous space stands out. Space is not so homogeneous for the animal as for us. Directions are not purely geometrical; they have their quality. We ourselves distinguish our right and left by a natural feeling. We cannot define them.

Now, the faculty of conceiving a space without quality is not at all an abstraction; on the contrary, to abstract presupposes the intuition of a homogeneous medium. We know two realities of different order, one heterogeneous, that of sensible qualities, the other homogeneous, which is space. The latter enables us to make sharp distinctions, to count, to abstract, perhaps even to

speak. Everybody regards time as an indefinite homogeneous medium, and yet everybody regards it as different from space. Is one, then, reducible to the other?

The genetic or empirical school tries to reduce the relations of extension to more or less complex relations of succession in duration. The relations of situation in space are defined as reversible relations of succession in duration. But succession in duration is not reversible. Pure duration is the form of succession of conscious states when one refrains from reflectively setting up a distinctness between the present state and former states. This does not mean being wholly absorbed in the passing sensation or idea, nor forgetting former states; but it means organizing them instead of juxtaposing them; they become like the notes of a melody, which, though they succeed each other, are apperceived in each other; they interpenetrate like the parts of a living being. Succession, then, can be conceived without distinctness, as a mutual penetration, a solidarity, an intimate organization of elements each of which, representative of the whole, is distinguished and isolated therefrom only for a thought capable of abstraction. We introduce the idea of space into our representation of pure succession; we so juxtaposit our states of consciousness as to perceive them simultaneously, not in, but beside each other; we project time upon space, we express duration in terms of extension. Succession then takes the form of a continuous line or of a chain, whose parts touch without interpenetration, which implies a simultaneous before and after instead of a successive—that is, a simultaneous succession, which is a contradiction.

Now, when the genetic school defines the relations of situation in space as reversible relations of succession in duration, it represents succession in duration in this self-contradictory way. You cannot make out an order among terms without distinguishing the terms and comparing the *places* they occupy, without perceiving them, therefore, as juxtaposed. Then to make out an order in the terms of a succession is to make the succession a simultaneity. So this attempt to represent space by means of time presupposes the representation of space. Of space in three dimensions, moreover; for the representation of two dimensions—that is, of a line—implies that of three dimensions: to perceive a line is to place oneself outside it and account for the void surrounding it.

Pure duration is nothing but a succession of qualitative changes fusing, interpenetrating, without outlines or tendency to externality by interrelation, without any kinship with number. Pure duration is pure heterogeneity.

No time that can be measured is duration, for heterogeneity is not quantity, not measurable. When we measure a minute we represent a quantity and *ipso facto* exclude a succession. We represent sixty oscillations of a pendulum, for instance, all together, in one apperception, as we represent sixty points of a line. Now, to represent each of these oscillations in succession, just as it is produced in space, no recollection of a preceding oscillation can enter the representation of any one, for space has kept no trace of it. One is confined to the present, and there is no more succession, or duration, in such a representation than in that of the group as a whole. A third way of representing these oscillations is conceivable. Like the first, it involves retention of preceding oscillations; but, unlike the first, it retains preceding oscillations *in* succeeding ones, instead of alongside of them; they interpenetrate and interorganize, as was just said, like the notes of a melody. Like the conceptual representation, the intuition involves a multiplicity. A conceptual multiplicity is distinct, homogeneous, quantitative, numerical; an intuitive multiplicity is indistinct, heterogeneous, qualitative, without analogy with number. Now, it is the latter that characterizes reality; and the multiplicity that we represent conceptually is only a symbol of the reality known to intuition.

Oscillations of a pendulum measure nothing; they count simultaneities. Outside of me, in space, there is only a single position of the pendulum; of past positions none remains. Because my duration is an organization and interpenetration of facts, I represent what I call "past" oscillations of the pendulum at the same time that I perceive the actual oscillation. Eliminate the ego, and there is only a single position of the pendulum, and no duration. Eliminate the pendulum, and there is only the heterogeneous duration of the ego. Within the ego is succession without simultaneity or reciprocal externality: without the ego, reciprocal externality without succession, which can exist only for a conscious spectator who remembers the past, and juxtaposes the symbols of the two oscillations in an auxiliary space.

Now, between this succession without externality and this

externality without succession a kind of endosmotic commerce goes on. Although the successive phases of our conscious life interpenetrate, some of them correspond to simultaneous oscillations of the pendulum; and since each oscillation is distinct—that is, one is no more when another is produced—we come to make the same distinctness between the successive moments of our conscious life. The oscillations of the pendulum decompose it, as it were, into mutually external parts: hence the erroneous idea of an internal homogeneous duration analogous to space, whose identical moments follow each other without interpenetrating. On the other hand, the pendular oscillations benefit by the influence they have exerted on our conscious life. Thanks to the recollection of their collective whole, which our consciousness has organized, they are preserved and then aligned; in short, we create a fourth dimension of space for them, which we call homogeneous time, and which enables the pendular movement, although produced in a certain spot, to be juxtaposed with itself indefinitely.

There is a real space, without duration, but in which phenomena appear and disappear simultaneously with our states of consciousness. There is a real duration, whose heterogeneous moments interpenetrate, but each of which can touch a state of the external world contemporaneous with it, and so be made separate from other movements. From the comparison of these two realities arises a symbolic representation of duration drawn from space. The trait common to these two terms, space and duration, is simultaneity, the intersection of time and space. This is how duration comes to get the illusory appearance of a homogeneous medium. But time is not measurable.

Neither is motion, the living symbol of time. Like duration, motion is heterogeneous and indivisible. But it is universally confused with the space through which the movable passes. The successive positions of the movable are in space, but the motion is not in space. Motion is passing from one position to another, which operation occupies duration and has reality only for a conscious spectator. Things occupy space; processes occupy duration, because they are mental syntheses and are unextended.

The synthesis which is motion is obviously not a new deploying in another homogeneous medium, of the same positions that have been perceived in space; for if it were such an act, the necessity

for resynthesis would be indefinitely repeated. The synthesis which is motion is a qualitative synthesis, a gradual organization of our successive sensations with each other, a unity analogous to that of a melodic phrase. The space traversed is a quantity, indefinitely divisible; the act by which space is traversed is a quality, and indivisible. Again that endosmotic exchange takes place, as between the melodically organized perception of the series of the pendulum's motions and its distinct objective presence at each instant. That is, we attribute to the motion the divisibility of the space traversed; and we project the act upon space, implying that outside as well as inside of consciousness the past coexists with the present. In space are only parts of space. In any point of space where the movable may be considered, there is only a position. You would search space in vain for motion.

From the fact that motion cannot be in space, Zeno concluded wrongly that motion is impossible. But those who try to answer his arguments by seeking it also in space, find it no more than he. Achilles overtakes the tortoise because each Achilles step and each tortoise step is not a space but a duration, whose nature is not addible nor divisible, and whose production therefore does not presuppose productions of parts of themselves, *ad infinitum*. Their development is not construction. They are entire while they are at all, and since the intersections of their terminal moments with space are not at equal distances, these intersections will coincide, or their spatial relations will be inverted, after a certain number of these simultaneities—whether of Achilles' steps or of the tortoise's—with points of the road have been counted; in other words, Achilles will have overtaken or outrun the tortoise after a certain number of steps.

To measure the velocity of a motion is simply to find a simultaneity; to introduce this simultaneity into calculation is to use a convenient means of foreseeing a simultaneity. Just as in duration there is nothing homogeneous except what does not lapse, to wit space in which simultaneities are aligned, so the homogeneous element of motion is that which least pertains to it, to wit the space traversed, which is immobility.

Science can work on time and motion only on condition of first eliminating the essential and qualitative element, duration from time, mobility from motion. Treatises on mechanics never de-

fine duration itself, but call two intervals of time equal when two identical bodies in circumstances identical at the commencement of each of these intervals, and subjected to identical actions and influences of every kind, have traversed the same space at the end of these intervals. There is no question, in science, of duration, but only of space and of simultaneities between outer change and certain of our psychic states. That duration does not enter into natural science is seen in the fact that if all the motions of the universe were quicker or slower, then, whereas consciousness would have an indefinable and qualitative intuition of this change, no scientific formulæ would be modified, since the same number of simultaneities would be produced again in space.

Analysis of the idea of velocity proves that mechanics has nothing to do with duration. If, on a trajectory AB, points M, N, P . . . such that $AM = MN = NP$. . . are reached at equal intervals of time, as defined above, and AM etc. are smaller than any assignable quantity, the motion is said to be uniform. The velocity of a uniform motion is therefore defined without appeal to notions other than those of space and simultaneity. By a somewhat complicated demonstration¹⁵ the same is shown to be true of the velocity of varying motion. Mechanics necessarily works with equations, and equations always express accomplished facts. It is of the essence of duration and motion to be in formation, so that while mathematics can express any moment of duration or any position taken by a movable in space, duration and motion themselves, being mental syntheses and not things, necessarily remain outside the calculation. The movable occupies the points of a line in turn, but the motion has nothing in common with this line. The positions occupied by the movable vary with the different moments of duration; indeed, the movable creates distinct moments merely by the fact that it occupies different positions; but duration has no identical nor mutually external moments, being essentially heterogeneous and indistinct.

Only space, then, is homogeneous; only things in space are distinctly multiple. There is no succession in space. So-called "successive" states of the outer world exist each alone. Their multiplicity is real only for a consciousness capable of preserving

15. *Time and Free Will*, pp. 118-119.

it and then juxtaposing it with others, thus externalizing them by interrelation. They are preserved by consciousness because they give rise to facts of consciousness which connect past and present by their interpenetrating organization. But one ceases when another appears, and so consciousness perceives them in the form of a distinct multiplicity, which amounts to aligning them in the space where each existed separately. Space used in this way is just what is meant by homogeneous time.

The spatial and the temporal kind of multiplicity are just as different as space and the real time that lapses. Spatial multiplicity is always substituted for the temporal kind, in discourse; their distinction cannot be expressed in language, because language is a product of space so that terms are inevitably spatial. Even to speak of "several" conscious states interpenetrating is to characterize them numerically, and so interrelate and mutually externalize or spatialize them.¹⁶ On the other hand, we cannot form the idea of a distinct multiplicity without considering, parallel to it, a qualitative multiplicity. Even in counting units on a homogeneous background, they organize in a dynamic, qualitative way. That is the psychological explanation of the effect of a "marked-down" price. The figures \$4.98 have a quality of their own, or rather the price has, that is quite inexpressible by the formula "\$5 minus 2c." *Quantity has its quality.*

In a succession of identical terms, then, each term has two aspects, spatial and temporal, objective and subjective, one always identical with itself, the other specific because of the unique quality its addition gives the collective whole of the series. Now, motion is just such a "qualifying," the subjective aspect of what, objectively, is a succession of identical terms, to wit the movable in successive positions. It is always the same movable, but in the synthesis, the images of it that memory calls earlier interpenetrate with the actual image; the synthesis, the interpenetration, is motion. Motion is real, and absolute; it is subjective, however, not objective. To represent motion is to objectify it. That is what Zeno did, and what everyone must do for *practical* purposes. But Zeno's purpose was speculative, and that, Professor Bergson

16. But Bergson apparently does not see that even the word "interpenetrate" fails to express anything radically different in temporal "multiplicity" from a certain character of spatial multiplicity. Cf. pp. 62, 101. In this, as in all its argument, intuitionism arguing is inevitably intuitionism contradicting itself. It is ineffable philosophy (see *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. IV, p. 123.)

thinks, is fatally different. When you objectify motion you deny it, for its essence is subjective. Strictly speaking, Zeno was right in finding motion *unthinkable*; he was wrong only in supposing that what is unthinkable is *ipso facto* impossible.

Evidently, the ego has these two aspects. The ego touches the external world; and its sensations, though fused in each other, retain something of the reciprocal externality which objectively characterizes their causes. Now, in dreaming, the ego does not touch the external world, and, in dreaming, time is not homogeneous; we do not measure time, in dreams, but only feel it. For sleep retards the play of organic functions and modifies the surface of communication between the ego and external things. But we need not sleep, to be thus withdrawn from environment. As I compose this train of thought, the hour strikes. When I notice the striking, I know some strokes have sounded which I did not notice. I know even their number, four. I know it by filling out the "melody," as it were, of which I am now conscious. I found the "four" in a way that was not counting, at all. The number of strokes has its quality, and anything but four fails to suit, differs in quality. A counted four and a felt four are absolutely different forms of multiplicity, and each is multiplicity. Under the ego of clearly-defined and countable states is the real ego which it symbolizes, in which succession implies fusion and organization. The states of this real ego language cannot seize, for that were to objectify it and fix its mobility. In giving these states the form of those of the symbolic ego, language makes them fall into the common domain of space, where they straightway become common and impersonal. This common and impersonal ego is the social and practical ego; this is the ego that uses language.

To language is due the illusion that qualities are permanent. But objects change by mere familiarity. We dislike, in manhood, smells and tastes which we call the same as those we liked in childhood. But they are not the same. It is only their causes that remain the same. The interpenetrating elements of conscious states are already deformed the moment a numerical multiplicity is discovered in the confused mass. Just now it had a subtle and unique coloration borrowed from its organization in developing life; here it is decolored and ready to receive a name.

This is the error of the associationistic school. Psychology

cannot reason concerning facts *being* accomplished, as it may concerning *accomplished* facts. The accomplishing of a fact can in no wise enter into discourse. It is unthinkable in precisely the same way as motion; or rather, it is the same case. Psychology cannot present the living ego as an association of terms mutually distinct and juxtaposed in a homogeneous medium.¹⁷ And association is just conceptualism applied to psychology. Its problems of personality have to be absurdly stated, in order to be stated at all. The terms of such problems deny what the problem posits, merely by being terms or names; they name the unnamable and define the indefinable. The solution is to cease thinking spatially of that which is temporal, to take the other attitude.¹⁸ Or, the author says here, using merely a different phrase, the solution is to substitute the real and concrete ego for its symbolic representation.

This second chapter of *Time and Free Will* undertakes to show that the successiveness of conscious states makes them uncountable. Simultaneity is indispensable to distinctness, and so to number. One can count the spatialized symbols of conscious states because these are not successive, but simultaneous.

Psychic multiplicity is non-numerical in the same sense and for the same reason that psychic intensity is non-quantitative, namely that it is pure heterogeneity and temporality. In the foregoing report, I have sometimes mitigated the baldness of the paradox as it is stated by Bergson, by substituting the term "variousness" for "multiplicity," in speaking of psychic facts. After all, it was a thankless subterfuge—an impertinence, perhaps, since Bergson himself is frank enough to insist that psychic multiplicity is as genuine multiplicity as the spatial and material sort. The

17. The living ego is a fact-in-the-accomplishing. You cannot really discourse about it! If psychology ever seems to manage this (and if this present book of Bergson's seems to manage it), the ego discoursed about is, in that fact, proven to be not the concrete and living ego at all, but the impersonal and objective one.

18. The attitude, that is, of intuition, which we have called the temporal attitude. The terms "spatial," "logical," "conceptual," applied here so often to the word "thought," are epithets of thought generally. There is no thought, in any meaning of the word more specific than "consciousness," that is not logical, conceptual and spatial in this Bergsonian sense.

If we cannot conceptualize our psychic facts, we cannot think them, then—the meaning is the same. But if we say that anything (which we name and, in the saying, define and think) is unnamable, indefinable and cannot be thought, we contradict ourselves. The doctrine, if true, must mean something that is not a self-contradiction. Does it mean that what we name and discourse about is only the spatialized symbol of the psychic fact? There can be little doubt, I think, that this is Bergson's meaning; but then the psychic fact is of such a nature as to be symbolized; and the distinction between a symbol and a name, by virtue of which a thing which can be symbolized may not be namable, requires explanation.

difference is that the former is indistinct and the latter distinct. But this difference is abysmal—indeed, it is absolute. All the power of Bergson's forceful style is concentrated on it. The point is turned and re-turned in every variety of expression. At the same time, the common *multiplicity* belonging in both conceptions is emphasized as much as their difference. The thesis thus reduces to this, that two varieties of the same genus are "absolutely different;" for we are explicitly advised, on one hand, that there is a multiplicity which is distinct, and a multiplicity which is indistinct; each is multiplicity. And, on the other hand, one is numerical and the other "*has no analogy with number.*"

In view of the superior qualities of the mind that is guilty of this unreasonableness, the conviction of sincerity which it carries tortures the conscientious critic. One cannot approve of the intolerant scorn of a certain book, in which Bergson's arguments are vilified as vain display, mere word-play; but patience is over-taxed in finding one's way through the plausibility of this chapter. The thesis, certainly, may be dismissed from any consideration whatever. Because of it, one knows in advance, beyond peradventure, that there is no validity in any argument in its defense. Yet, in spite of all, the chapter challenges study; and thorough study of it cannot fail to put the truth in clearer light, just because its error is so plausible.

Counting is synthesis, the argument goes; but a synthesized succession is not a succession, it is a simultaneity. And simultaneity presupposes spatial determination in the coexistent elements. From Bergson's point of view, it is a radical error, however universal an error, to regard the relation of simultaneity as a temporal determination. In fact, there is no such thing as a temporal determination; and every determination, for Bergson, not only is not temporal, but is spatial. Like the argument about non-quantitative intensity, this argument for non-plural multiplicity (save the mark!) turns on the equation of homogeneity with space. But the present argument involves its own peculiar fallacy, as well, namely the fallacy which Professor Perry describes¹⁹ as confusion of a relation symbolized with the relation between symbols. "It is commonly supposed," Perry writes, "that when a complex is represented by a formula, the elements

19. *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, pp. 232-4.

of the complex must have the same relation as that which subsists between the parts of the formula; whereas, as a matter of fact, *the formula as a whole* represents or describes a complex other than itself. If I describe *a* as 'to the right of *b*,' does any difficulty arise because in my formula *a* is to the left of *b*? If I speak of *a* as greater than *b*, am I to assume that because my symbols are outside one another that *a* and *b* must be outside one another? Such a supposition would imply a most naïve acceptance of that very 'copy theory' of knowledge which pragmatism has so severely condemned. And yet such a supposition seems everywhere to underlie the anti-intellectualist's polemic. The intellect is described as substituting for the interpenetration of the real terms [in an "indistinct" psychic multiplicity] the juxtaposition of their symbols; as though analysis discovered terms, and then *conferred* relations of its own. . . . Terms are found *in* relation, and may be thus described without any more artificiality, without any more imposing of the forms of the mind on its subject-matter, than is involved in the bare mention of a single term.

" . . . one may mean continuity despite the fact that the symbols and words are discrete. The word 'blue' may mean blue, although the word is not blue. Similarly, continuity may be an arrangement meant by a discontinuous arrangement of words and symbols."

So of the simultaneity or coexistence among the conceptual symbols by which successive psychic states are counted: there is nothing in such a relation among the symbols to falsify the process of counting as a cognitive process whose meaning is a non-simultaneous relation among the psychic facts symbolized. As was noted above,²⁰ the quantitative determination of psychic facts depends solely on an aspect of homogeneity essential to such facts, for which aspect no better evidence is possible than that other aspect which Bergson attributes to them, of heterogeneity; for the two conceptions, instead of excluding each other, imply each other absolutely. All that is necessary, in order that psychic facts should be countable, is that they should possess an aspect of homogeneity. And for this, spatiality is unnecessary; for spatiality is a conception distinct from homogeneity.

Bergson's identification of homogeneity with spatiality is a case

20. Pp. 42, 43. Cf. also below, p. 93.

of what Professor Perry calls "definition by initial predication."²¹ Space is homogeneous; therefore homogeneity is space. As if the fact that homogeneity is a character of space were anything against its being a character also of time or anything else. The following is the justification offered by Bergson for identifying homogeneity with space: "If space is to be defined as the homogeneous, it seems that inversely every homogeneous and unbounded medium will be space. For, homogeneity here consisting in the absence of every quality, it is hard to see how two forms of the homogeneous could be distinguished from one another."²² The first clause begs the question by defining space as "the" homogeneous. Such identification of space and homogeneity is the point to be proved. The second sentence begs the question again, where homogeneity is supposed "here" (*i. e.* in the case of space) to consist in the absence of every quality. Moreover, as we have noted above (p. 43), space possesses a very determinate quality, direction, which differentiates it from other homogeneity. Finally, it can be true that homogeneity is absence of quality only on the Bergsonian assumptions that quality is exclusively subjective, that homogeneity is exclusively objective, and that only the subjective is positive. Now, if quality is not objective, judgments cannot be made concerning it; but Bergson is constantly making such judgments. And to distinguish, in point of homogeneity or of positivity, between "the subjective" and "the objective" is to reify two equally abstract aspects of positive reality. The quality of the homogeneous is doubtless *simple*, and so indefinable. But Bergson nowhere shows how the homogeneous is less positive than the heterogeneous, although the thesis is the sum and substance of his philosophy. Lacking further light on the point, one can only invoke such experiences as the simple colors, for instance, —or, for that matter, any simple quality—for cases of reality as positive as any heterogeneity, and, obviously, no less qualified. And nothing seems easier than the distinction between redness, for instance, and spatiality. Bergson's whole dialectic rests on reification of such correlative abstractions as homogeneity and heterogeneity, quality and relation etc. in a "purity" which not only is not concretely experienced, but is not even capable of being conceived, because each con-

21. *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

22. *Time and Free Will*, p. 98.

cept drags the other ineluctably into its own definition. If either space or homogeneity were indeed absence of quality, they could not be distinguished from time, nor from heterogeneity, nor from anything else; in short, they could not be conceived at all.

The present essay aims to report Bergson's own work with a fair degree of fulness; but it is beyond my plan to follow exposition with criticism point by point in the details, even, in some cases, when these are of important and wide implication. For discussion of Bergson's contention (based on analysis of the idea of velocity, as outlined above) that mechanics has nothing to do with time, the reader is referred to pages 255-61 of Perry's *Present Philosophical Tendencies*. Perry shows, in this passage, that such a contention, again, depends on "confusing the symbol with what it means. To one who falls into this confusion, it may appear that an equation cannot refer to time because the structure of the equation itself is not temporal; because the symbols are simultaneously present in the equation. But if t is one of the terms of the equation, and t means time, then the equation means a temporal process. Furthermore, an equation may define a relation, such as $=$, $<$, or $>$, between temporal quantities, in which case the full meaning of the equation is still temporal. For changes, events, or even pure intervals, may stand in non-temporal relations, such as those above, without its in the least vitiating their temporality."

Bergson's solution of Zeno's paradoxes is another detail of this chapter which is of a good deal of interest; but it applies no new principle to the support of the impossibility of counting psychic facts. Without a clearer conception of the commerce or intersection between time and space, which he characterizes only by the name of "simultaneity," his reply to Zeno leaves the question of the divisibility of time as problematic as ever. Achilles outstrips the tortoise, he says, "because each of Achilles' steps and each of the tortoise's steps are indivisible acts in so far as they are movements, and are different magnitudes in so far as they are space."²³ They are indivisible in the same sense in which a living organism is indivisible: if you divide them, no division is a part of that which *was*. But the trouble is that they *are* divisible

23. *Time and Free Will*, p. 113.

also in the same sense in which the organism is divisible. It is the most extravagant of assumptions that analysis of a living body into right and left etc.—which, to be sure, is serviceable to activity upon it—is, because of its service to action, not a character of the object itself. And of motion the same sort of analysis is a patent fact of experience: there is an earlier, middle and latter phase. The possibility of this patent fact is the crux of the problem. No extant answer to Zeno is satisfactory to everybody. I shall refer the reader to Professor Fullerton's treatment of the paradoxes, in Chapter XI of his *System of Metaphysics*, as the solution which seems to me to be at the same time the most closely related of any that I know, to Bergson's, and free of Bergson's error. Bergson's solution has at least this element of truth, that Zeno confuses the space traversed with something else concerned in every case of motion. Fullerton makes a distinction between any actual experience of space or time, and the possibility of indefinitely magnified substitutes for such experience; and shows a way in which motion can be relegated to the former ("apparent" space) and denied to the latter ("real" space) without either denying reality to motion or infinite divisibility to real space and time.

Bergson's differentiation of temporal succession from spatial seriality gets all its cogency from an exclusive attention, when consciousness is concerned, to the aspects of heterogeneity (quality) and compenetration (continuity) which consciousness shows; and, when space is concerned, to its aspects of homogeneity (quantity) and juxtaposition of parts (discreteness). As always, with correlative abstractions, Bergson reifies them: they exclude each other, for him, whereas, in truth, they imply each other, entering into each other's definition so that each is unthinkable except by means of the other. Time is continuous, Bergson insists rightly; but jumps to the conclusion that therefore time is not discrete. Time is heterogeneous, therefore not homogeneous. Space is discrete (its parts spread out), therefore not continuous; homogeneous, therefore not heterogeneous. If any demonstration is necessary that these terms do imply each other, instead of excluding each other, the case of heterogeneity and homogeneity is only the case of resemblance and difference (cf. page 44). In regard to the heterogeneity of space, its differentiation by way of direction must not be forgotten. As for the other pair of terms, continuity

can manifest itself only *in extenso*, and discreteness requires a separating *medium*.

Wherever Bergson objects to expressing time in terms of space, the real objection is to the expression of time in terms of homogeneity. This he would not only admit, but insist upon. But his demonstration that homogeneity is a character exclusively spatial is a *petitio principii*.²⁴ Of the attempt to measure a minute, he writes as follows: "I say, *e. g.*, that a minute has just elapsed, and I mean by this that a pendulum, beating the seconds, has completed sixty oscillations. If I picture these sixty oscillations to myself all at once, by a single mental perception, I exclude by hypothesis the idea of a succession. I do not think of sixty strokes which succeed one another, but of sixty points on a fixed line, each one of which symbolizes, so to speak, an oscillation of the pendulum. If, on the other hand, I wish to picture these sixty oscillations in succession, but without altering the way they are produced in space, I shall be compelled to think of each oscillation to the exclusion of the recollection of the preceding one, for space has preserved no trace of it; but by doing so I shall condemn myself to remain forever in the present; I shall give up the attempt to think a succession or a duration."

Notwithstanding his acuteness as a psychologist, Bergson misses the nature of the apperception both of sixty points on a line and of sixty oscillations of a pendulum. And the impossibility of counting psychic facts depends on this misapprehension. He misses the fact that an apperception of sixty points on a line includes, as an essential feature, the *serial* order, the here-and-there determination (a distinctive qualitative determination) of this spatial fact. And he misses the fact that an apperception of a non-spatial rhythm includes, as an essential feature, the successive *order*, the earlier-and-later determination, of this psychic fact. Now, seriality is not succession, if you like, except in so far as each is order. But this is no more than to say that the two orders, time and space, are distinguishable—are two, in fact. It is not the slightest obstruction to conceiving each as order, and as numerically determined. For there is no evidence except Bergson's fundamental fallacy of "definition by initial predication," to show why homogeneity and order, as such, are exclu-

24. Cf. above, p. 58.

sively spatial. The discreteness of parts of space is thinkable only by the intervening spaces: space is as continuous (as "compenetrative") as time.²⁵ On the other hand, the compenetration of time is not only nothing *against* its divisibility, but divisibility and compenetration (in the only rigorous meaning the word will bear, that is, continuity) are indispensable to each other, inverse aspects of each other. You can divide *only* what is connected, as you can connect only what is distinct. Time, then, is as discrete as space.

For every instance of temporal "compenetration," and "solidarity," its perfect spatial analogue is plain to the inspection of anyone who will only look that way, to anyone whose attention is not hypnotized by an ulterior purpose to its exclusion.²⁶ Thus the melodic phrase is present in each of its parts as much as, and no more than, the mosaic figure is present in each of its parts. The "felt four" of the clock strokes is felt as four not otherwise, I think, than a four which might figure in the pattern of a frieze. The same limitations, moreover, apply to such felt multiplicity, whether of rhythm or of pattern. It must be a relatively simple complex, to be apperceived, in either case. You could not feel fifty, and the difficulty is the same difficulty in time as in space. One measures a minute or a century just as one measures an inch or the distance from the earth to the sun: the indispensable condition is the continuity and homogeneity which belong to both quantities.

The proposition that oscillations of a pendulum measure nothing, but count simultaneities apparently means that oscillations, as physical facts, have no duration of their own, and so cannot overlie duration as a unit of measurement. This would at least be an intelligible, even if a false, representation; but, if oscillations cannot measure, how can they count? What is just that difference between counting and measuring, by virtue of which that which can count cannot measure? Simultaneity Bergson defines as the intersection of space and time. Now, counting, as well as measuring, implies a continuum. Measuring,

25. In order to give any meaning to the term "compenetrating" or "interpenetration" (which I take to be mutually equivalent, in Bergson's use), I am compelled to interpret them as synonymous with the "compactness" of a continuum—as synonymous, in fact, with "continuity." Bergson does not make clear how these terms can mean anything else (cf. below, p. 101.)

26. Bergson himself, of course, is perfectly aware—in other connections—of the continuity of space!

certainly, if it is theoretically perfect, can apply only to a continuum; but counting, which obviously presupposes discreteness, then requires also the indispensable condition and correlative of discreteness, which is continuity. The intersection of space and time thus evidently involves equal continuity and discreteness in both; if they can intersect, and their intersections are countable, each is both countable and measurable. The "purely" temporal phenomena of our conscious life, although interpenetrating, "correspond individually" to an oscillation of the pendulum, which, though a "purely" spatial phenomenon, "occurs at the same time with" the former. Such "endosmotic commerce" between psychical and physical events seems to be decisive for a real community of nature between their respective forms, time and space—such, for instance, as common homogeneity and continuity.

CHAPTER II

MIND AND MATTER, SPIRIT AND BODY

Bergson regards knowledge of oneself as the optimal case of knowing; oneself, he thinks, is the sample of reality which best serves for an acquaintance with the nature of reality in general. "The existence of which we are most assured and which we know best is unquestionably our own, for of every other object we have notions which may be considered external and superficial, whereas, of ourselves, our perception is internal and profound."²⁷ It is this perfect or optimal relation of identity or inwardness—which one bears to oneself—that is the condition of true (*i. e.* intuitive) knowledge. And in this case we find existence to be a perpetual flow of transition. That we think of our states as distinct from each other is due to the fact that reflection on one's own existence is, unlike the flow of that existence itself, necessarily discontinuous. It is only now and then that motives arise which turn the attention to the self as an object, like others, for examination. The flow of change is not uniform, to be sure. It is quite imperceptible to our reflective attention most of the time, but if it ever ceased, we should at that moment cease to exist. Only the relatively sudden and interesting periods of transition get our attention. Then we see a new "state of consciousness" which we add to the others that we have mentally strung together in a temporal line. So we conceive of our history as the sum of elements as distinct as beads on a string.

This intellectualistic view of the self eliminates the peculiar characteristic of its reality, namely, its duration, or the flow of its change. Like a snowball, accumulating its substance as it rolls, duration goes on preserving itself in incessant change that accumu-

27. *Creative Evolution*, p. 1.

lates all its past. Time, Bergson says, is the very stuff the psychological life is made of. "There is, moreover, no stuff more resistant nor more substantial."²⁸

Life and inertia or matter are two antagonistic principles or tendencies. Life is the positive and active principle; reality and duration are predicable only of life. Matter is an "inversion" or "interruption" of life; its value is negative to life and to reality. "All that which seems *positive* to the physicist and to the geometer would become, from this new point of view, an interruption or inversion of true positivity, which would have to be defined in psychological terms."²⁹ Matter is a determination of reality in much the same sense as that in which the reality of the Platonic idea suffers diminution under the influence of the principle of not-being, resulting in a world of sensible experience or of appearance. Bergson points out that the real in Plato is the timeless, motionless, definite idea, and the relatively unreal is the ever-changing "infinite" or indefinable datum of experience, to which duration is essential. Bergson reverses the Platonic metaphysics: reality is the ever-changing and indefinable; rather, it is change itself. "There are no things, there are only actions." ". . . things and states are only views, taken by our mind, of becoming."³⁰ The principle antagonistic to reality gives rise to the timeless, definite concept, which is a view or appearance of reality operated by intelligence in the service of action. As our practical interests break up the continuum of time into discrete states, so they break up the continuum of matter into distinct bodies. The active antagonism of time, which is pure quality or heterogeneity, and space, which is pure quantity or homogeneity, results in the world of our experience, comprising "states" of consciousness and things or objects.

The relation between life and matter in the evolution of the world, Bergson represents by the figure of a generation of steam in a boiler.³¹ Life, the positive principle, streams or flows, like the steam, by the force which is its very nature. In its course, this vital impetus is checked, as a jet of steam is checked, by its condensation, and falls back upon itself in drops, retarding, but not annihilating, the flow. But we are warned that the figure must be

28. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 248

31. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

corrected in that the interruption or inversion of the impetus is due to a principle inherent in the impetus itself, not to an external determination. If there were such an external principle, the two would seem coördinate in reality, but the reality of matter is as the reality of *rest*, which, as the negation of motion, is nothing positive, yet is not a mere naught.

Sometimes, in reading Bergson, it seems very clear that reality and matter must exclude each other, since one is the negation of the other; and perception and conception, whose object is matter, are not knowledge, because that object is unreal. Moreover, not only is the stuff of reality that *psychic process* which is life and lapsing time, but there is no stuff more resistant nor more substantial. And in numerous other ways the mutual exclusion of reality and matter seems quite fundamental to Bergsonism. One can never remain long in any security about this, however. If Bergsonism is Platonism reversed, it is natural that the peculiarities of the latter should reappear in some form. Platonic not-being is much too important and too active to be denied a coequal positivity with being. Over and above these "worlds," moreover, there is that one in which we live, with a third status. Perhaps it is this which is most like Bergsonian matter—"nothing positive, yet not a mere naught"! In the letter from which I have already quoted, Monsieur Bergson wrote me, concerning a previous paper of mine:³² "You give me the choice between 'yes' and 'no,' whereas I cannot respond with either, but must mix them. In each particular case, the 'yes' and 'no' have to be apportioned, and this is just why the philosophy I adhere to is susceptible of improvement and progress. For instance, you find that my premises lead to this conclusion: 'Matter has no duration; but duration is synonymous with reality; therefore matter is not real.' But, to my mind, matter has exactly the same reality as *rest*, which exists only as negation of motion, yet is something other than absolute nothingness. All that is positive in my 'vital impetus' is motion; stoppage of this motion constitutes materiality; the latter, therefore, is nothing positive, yet not a mere naught, absolute nothingness being no more stoppage than motion."

If one seek (it is not to be found, I think, in Bergson's writings) an explanation of this abatement or diminution of the *élan vital*,

32. *Jour. Phil. Psy. and Sci. Meth.*, Vol. V, No. 22.

this tendency toward rest, the problem turns into the very ancient problem of the polarity of being in subject and object. In Platonism, matter arises as product of an eternal antagonism between two coeval principles, the Idea and Not-being. Not-being is thus something efficient, something that is capable of entering as a factor, together with the Idea, into a product, the Sensible Object. The truth is, therefore, that Not-being is something very real: it *is* something because it *does* something. It is as real as the Idea, because it is as efficient as the Idea. And in the Bergsonian creative evolution there often seems just such an antagonism as this, between two coördinate, efficient, and therefore real principles. Thus: "The impetus of life . . . is confronted with matter, that is to say, with the movement that is the inverse of its own."³³ And: "Life as a whole . . . will appear as a wave which rises, and which is opposed by the descending movement of matter."³⁴ But, as with Plato, so with Bergson, dubbing the hated principle "Not-being" or "Negation of Positive Reality" hardly avails against the soundness of its claim to positivity. And the case is not different if the "*élan vital*" is a self-limited absolute instead of an eternal dualism: the philosopher's selection of one of the two coefficients or poles of this self-polarized absolute, rather than the other, to be snubbed, is arbitrary, instinctive, personal. With Plato it is one, with Bergson the other; no logical principle determines it, in either case.

On no other point, I believe, is criticism of Bergson so clamorous or so unanimous as on his conception of matter. Without doubt, his conception of matter is obscure. Time and space (terms equivalent for Bergson, to life and matter) being essentially antagonistic, must *essentially imply* each other; and if so, do they not stand in the same rank as real existences? In what sense, then, is either real and the other unreal, except by an arbitrary decree? The ontological obscurity has its corresponding epistemological obscurity as to the cognitive status of knowledge of matter, which is the crux of Bergson's philosophy. Instinct is suited to life and duration; intelligence, to matter and space. Science says many things about time, but affords no acquaintance with time itself. The duration of the unit of time is a matter of indifference to the

33. *Creative Evolution*, p. 251.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

meaning and value of any scientific formula.³⁵ For example, if this unit were made infinity, and the physical process represented by the formula were thus regarded as infinitely quick, *i. e.* an instantaneous, timeless fact, the instantaneity of the fact would be irrelevant to any truth expressed by the formula. The only truth the formula expresses is a system of relations, which remains the same for any unit of time. Science knows no past or future, nothing but an incessantly renewed instantaneous present, without substance. The conclusions of science are given in the premises, mathematically; the world of science is a strict determinism. In the real world of consciousness, on the other hand,—knowledge of which can only be acquaintance with it—the future is essentially contingent and unforeseeable, for each new phase is an absolute creation, into which the whole past is incorporated without determining it.

The active principle of life Bergson describes by the phrase *tendency to create*. Its movement is a creative evolution. Life flows, or, as we have said, rolls on like a snowball, in an unceasing production of new forms, each of which retains, while it modifies and adds to, all its previous forms. But the figure of the snowball soon fails. One of the most significant facts of the creative evolution of life is the division of its primitive path into divergent paths. The primitive *élan* contains elementary virtualities of tendency which can abide together only up to a certain stage of their development. It is of the nature of a tendency to break up in divergent elementary tendencies, as a fountain-jet sprays out. As the primitive tendency develops, elements contained in it which were mutually compatible in one and the same primitive organism, being still in an undeveloped stage, become incompatible as they grow. Hence the indefinite bifurcation of the forms of life into realms, phyla, genera, species, individuals. It is a cardinal error, Bergson thinks, to regard vegetative, instinctive and intellectual life, in the Aristotelian manner, as successive stages in one and the same line of development. They represent three radically different lines of evolution, not three stages along the same line.

A tendency common to all life is to store the constantly diffused

35. Cf. Perry's comment, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 235.

solar energy in reservoirs where its equilibrium is unstable. This tendency, of alimentation, is complementary to the tendency to resolve equilibrium of potential energy by sudden, explosive release of energy in actions. As the primitive organism developed (undoubtedly an ambiguous form, partaking of the characters of both the animal and the vegetable) these two tendencies became mutually incompatible in one and the same form of life. Those forms which became vegetables owe their differentiation from ancestral forms to a preponderant leaning toward the manufacture of the explosive, as the animal owes its animality to a leaning toward the release of energy in sudden and intermittent actions.

The vegetable, drawing its nourishment wherever it may find it, from the ground and from the air, has no need of locomotion. The animal, dependent on the vegetable or on other animals for food, must go where it may be found. The animal must move. Now, consciousness emerges *pari passu* with the ability to act, and torpor is characteristic of fixity. The humblest organism is conscious to the extent to which it can act freely. Actions may be effective either by virtue of an excellence in the use of instruments of action or by virtue of an excellence in adapting the instrument to the need. Action may thus assume either of two very different characters, the one instinctive, self-adaptive reaction, the other intelligent manufacture. The two tendencies have bifurcated within the animal realm. One path reaches its present culmination in certain hymenoptera (*e. g.* ants, bees, wasps), the other in man.

Thus the development of instinct in man has become subordinate; human consciousness is dominated by intelligence. Hence the universality of the vice of intellectualism in philosophy. Man, because he is dominated by intelligence, supposes intelligence to be coextensive with consciousness, whereas it is only one of the elementary tendencies which consciousness comprises, and the one which is impotent to know the flow of reality. Spencer's evolutionism affords no acquaintance with the reality of life. His so-called evolution starts with the already evolved. Hence all it reaches is the made, the once-for-all, the timeless. It is merely a biological theory, and no advance over positive science. It is not a philosophy.

Having shown the origin of intelligence in the more extensive principle of life, and limited its sphere of operation to inert matter,

the author turns to the nature of instinct. The greater part of the psychic life of living beings that are characteristically instinctive Bergson believes to be states which he describes as knowledge in which there is no representation.³⁶ "Representation is stopped up by action."³⁷ A purely instinctive action would be indistinguishable from a mere vital process. When the chick, for example, breaks the shell, it seems merely to keep up the motion that has carried it through the embryonic life. But neither instinct nor intelligence is ever pure, and we have in ourselves a vague experience of what must happen in the consciousness of an animal acting by instinct. We have this experience in phenomena of feeling, in unreflecting sympathies and antipathies. "Instinct is sympathy. If this sympathy could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, it would give us the key to vital operations. . . . Intuition, to wit, instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely, leads us into the very inwardness of life . . . It is true that this æsthetic intuition . . . attains only the individual, but we can conceive an inquiry turned in the same direction as art, which would take life *in general* for its object."³⁸

In *Matter and Memory*, mind is represented as varying, in its states, between two limits, "pure perception," which is just action, and "dreaming." The limit of action is where the rôle of mind ceases, the vanishing-point of knowledge. But at the other limit, dreaming, mind is in full swing, having freed itself, by an inner tension, from the obstructive influence of body. Far from vanishing at this limit, as at the other, knowledge is here at its apogee. It is here "pure."

It is important for Bergson to recognize an organic connection (obstructive to mind, as he Platonically conceives) between mind and body, in order that he may establish the possibility of the state of "pure perception," in which mind activity coincides with bodily activity by a yielding, relaxed concurrence with the latter's influence. Mind is here passive; its rôle in the life of the organism ceases in this state. But it is equally important, for the ontological independence of mind, that at the "dreaming" pole the

36. *Creative Evolution*, p. 175.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 176, 177.

tension which is the very constitution of its knowing should free mind from bodily influence. This tension, at its ideal limit, must so disconnect the mind from the body that the former becomes impotent, as Bergson says, for any efficiency in the physical world. It seems to be, to all intents and purposes, a disembodied state. Knowledge having then no possible end in action is clearly its own end. Intellection is a utility, operating in the world of matter; knowledge is absolute, self-centered identity of subject and object. Such, I suppose, is God's "thought of thought" in Aristotle's conception.

This fluctuation of the relation between mind and body, from a connection which is vital to absolute disconnection, is a reappearance of the ambiguity discussed on pages 66-7. At one moment the world seems a Platonic dualism; in the next, a self-limited or polarized absolutism, like Fichte's or Hegel's. Whatever the "ideal limit" of mind's cognitive "tension" may be conceived to be, there ought to be no question of more and less, in the matter of disconnectedness, strictly speaking. We do not understand movement from connection to disconnection, through intermediate stages, as mind is here represented to move, in its states of knowledge. First mind must be like a certain part of matter, so that it can rebound by its "tension" from a certain other part; and then, as soon as it has rebounded, what would be true of the thing that could do this must suddenly become untrue of it, presumably because of the rebound, no other reason being assignable to account for the ensuing disconnection with matter. One bit of matter can rebound from another, but it is then as much connected with *matter* as before. We do not understand how mind, when it has thus rebounded from one particular material attachment thereby becomes materially unattached.

This is nevertheless a suggestive scheme of relation. It seems to me to be marred with one radical fault: these limits of knowledge are wrongly related. Their negation of each other should be the opposition of antipodes, not of contradictories. The difference is the radical difference between implication and exclusion. They do not exclude each other, but imply each other. Each vanishes without the other.

In activity, there is externalized motion on one hand and resistance, or virtual reaction, on the other. Action and reaction are cases of polarity; they are necessary to each other to give each

other form. In the cognitive subject, reaction that were purely virtual, without externalizing implication, would be indeterminate dreaming; motion that were purely externalized, without implication of inner virtuality, would be indeterminate activity. Now, anything that is indeterminate or formless simply is not, if being has any significance whatever; for formless significance is a contradiction; certainly the significance of anything would constitute a formal aspect of it. "Pure" matter or quantity is pure nothing, in the sense that it is quantity of nothing. These "pure" limits thus snuff themselves out. And variation between them is not a progression from not-being to being or *vice versa*, not a strengthening or weakening of the variable function's essence. Such a notion depends on the absurdity of a not-being that can do things to being, with fluctuating prepotency in the struggle! Strengthening and weakening—degree in any guise—has no application to essence. In any phase, that is, knowledge is itself and nothing else; it cannot be more or less itself.

That which varies concomitantly with the variations in complexion of consciousness, is the dynamic relation between subject and object. It may be expressed as variation of ratio between virtual and real action. At each pole activity vanishes, and consciousness with it. At one pole, where the ratio is zero, it vanishes in the direction of "real" or externalized action, which means that the subject meets no opposing negativity, and so no object; the relation of activity is extinguished through lack of one of its terms. At the other pole, where the ratio is infinity, action vanishes in the direction of "virtuality." And this means that in the subject there is no positivity, no subjectivity, to oppose to universal negativity or objectivity. The result is the same extinction of the relation through lack of a term. A subject term is lacking in one case, an object in the other.

Knowledge, for Bergson, corresponds only to the ratio infinity, of virtual to real action; all other ratios between them are less than knowledge. To this I object that infinite virtuality is indeterminate virtuality, which is a naught reached in the opposite way from that naught which is infinite and indeterminate actuality. Indeterminate action is nothing, and so is indeterminate knowledge. Identification of knowledge with any specific value of the ratio of virtual to real action is not determined by any logical principle. When a function varies between a positive and a

negative pole, neither pole is an apogee where the function is most itself. On the contrary, as in the variation of an including angle, each pole is a limiting position in which the essential nature of the variable is extinguished. Nor is it most itself midway between the poles, nor at any other privileged position, for it is absolutely and fully itself, and nothing else, in every phase. The genuineness of a state of awareness would then depend also on the genuineness of the reciprocity between the terms of this dynamic ratio. Where they are not distinct, where subject and object are identical, awareness vanishes through lack of a quantitative coefficient, as it vanishes at each pole through lack of a qualitative coefficient. In other words, knowledge of a thing by itself, like action of a thing on itself, is a cancelation of terms of opposite sign, a contradiction, and *the subject and object, whether of action or of consciousness, are essentially external to each other.*

Bergson is treating consciousness as such as if it could be more or less conscious, as, indeed, a conscious *subject* may be. That is, he is treating consciousness as if it could be of a nature more or less aware or cognitive; he is treating variations of phase as if they were augmentations and diminutions of essence; he is treating quality quantitatively, an error which would not have been possible if he had adhered to the purely conceptual distinction between quality and quantity. And he is treating the variations of cognitive complexion or phase as if they depended on variations in a certain relation (the mutual externality of subject and object) which is invariable and absolute—incapable, that is, of degree.

"This book," says the first sentence of *Matter and Memory*, "affirms the reality of spirit and the reality of matter." Lower in the same page, however, it is explained that "Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of 'images.' And by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*,—an existence placed half-way between the 'thing' and the 'representation.' . . . the object exists in itself, and, on the other hand, the object is, in itself, pictorial, as we perceive it; image it is, but a self-existing image (pp. vii, viii).

" . . . memory . . . is just the intersection of mind and matter . . . the psychical state seems to us to be . . . immensely wider than the cerebral state . . . our cerebral

state contains more or less of our mental state in the measure that we reel off our psychic life into action or wind it up into pure knowledge . . . our psychic life may be lived at different heights, now nearer to action, now further removed from it" (pp. xii, xiii, xiv).

The "intersection of mind and matter" suggests a profound dualism, and this Bergson acknowledges to be essential to his theory. It is true that no opportunity is lost, to discount the reality of matter; but the relations which it sustains to mind are such as can exist only between terms whose reality is coördinate. Perception is just that biological reactive function of material organism engaged with material stimulus, which every psychological text-book proclaims it to be. But the actual conscious state always has memory in it, as well as perception; or rather, the state as conscious is nothing but memory; perception itself, "pure" perception, is action pure and simple, and not cognitive at all.

This is an abuse of the word "perception," but the epistemology can show a good deal of reason. After all, our perceptions (as we call the states of mind in which we are involved with a material stimulus) mean something, necessarily. They mean *something*, I insist, the strangest of them. We sometimes speak otherwise, saying that an object of perception means nothing to us. But, I submit, this is only a manner of speaking. A state that meant *nothing*, absolutely, were genuinely *blank*, empty, contentless; and there is no difference, I take it, between a state without content and a state that is unconscious. Well, then, meaning something, as a conscious state must, what does it mean? Bergson, I am sure, is right in holding that to mean is to recognize, to recall, to remember. This makes of every concrete perceptive state, so-called, a rudimentary deduction, a genuine syllogism, a work of intellect. The major premise is a memory; the minor is an immediate reactive, sensori-motor datum; the conclusion is the subsumption of the present datum under the memory. Thus: The experience to which I attach the name "orange" has such and such characters (remembered major premise); the present reactive state has these characters (perceptive datum, minor premise); therefore this state is a case of the orange experience. The only difficulty is the nature of the process of subsumption of the present datum with the memory. The present datum in its purity as present is a reaction merely, an event in the physical world. Its nature owns nothing

psychical. What commerce, then, can it have with mind? To call its commerce with mind "subsumption" is to give a label to a problem. To call memory the "intersection" of the physical world with mind seems another label, of a metaphorical sort, for the same problem.

But, for the present, let us hear the doctrine. To my thinking, it is Bergson's best work, and full of illuminating suggestion. To the radical dualist, it should be completely satisfactory. As an adherent of a certain double-aspect conception of the body-mind relation, I shall eventually propose a correction and completion, very radical, certainly, but all that is necessary to make Bergson's treatment of this problem of the highest interest and value to myself.

The body, then, in Bergson's theory, yes, the brain itself, is no producer, repository nor reproducer of any element of consciousness. The body is a center of reaction, and nothing else. "The size, shape, even the color, of external objects is modified according as my body approaches or recedes from them, . . . the strength of an odour, the intensity of a sound, increases or diminishes with distance; finally, . . . this very distance represents, above all, the measure in which surrounding bodies are insured, in some sort, against the immediate action of my body. In the degree that my horizon widens, the images which surround me seem to be painted upon a more uniform background and become to me more indifferent. The more I narrow this horizon, the more the objects which it circumscribes space themselves out distinctly according to the greater or less ease with which my body can touch and move them. They send back, then, to my body, as would a mirror, its eventual influence; they take rank in an order corresponding to the growing or decreasing powers of my body. *The objects which surround my body reflect its possible action upon them.*"³⁹ Cut a sensory nerve, and the reactive process is destroyed, and with it, perception. "Change the objects, or modify their relation to my body, and everything is changed in the interior movements of my perceptive centres. But everything is also changed in 'my perception.' My perception is, then, a function of these molecular movements; it depends upon them."⁴⁰ "What then are these movements? . . . they are, within my body, the movements

39. *Matter and Memory*, pp. 6, 7.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

intended to prepare, while beginning it, the reaction of my body to the action of external objects . . . they foreshadow at each successive moment its virtual acts."⁴¹ It may seem that my reaction to a body is the same whether I perceive it visually or tactually or otherwise. But movements externally identical may differ internally; there is a different organization of the same gross function with different microscopic functions. The *meaning* has ultimately an important sameness, since meaning is a function of biological adjustment. But different inner organizations are still the explanation of different ways of perceiving what is, in all biologically important respects, the same object.

Serious fault has been found⁴² with Bergson's attempt to establish, by scientific research in the subject of aphasia, the ontological independence of spirit, the seat of memory, from body. But on other grounds than such scientific investigation the issue of this attempt appears to me at best a futile achievement; for the result is in any case the reinstatement, untouched, of that problem of all radical dualism, a problem which Bergson solves only by metaphor whose brilliance may be luminous itself, but has no illumination for the problem, which is how reactive states are also conscious.

There is a theory which relates consciousness and matter to each other as the opposite sides of a surface in relief. The objection to this "double aspect" theory that has weighed most, in criticism, is that the ground of the parallelism between convexity and concavity—to wit, a logical implication of each other—is obviously absent in the parallelism of consciousness and matter. Whatever parallelism experience actually finds between them is not deducible from either concept: there is nothing in the definition of the sensation blue to suggest an afferent nervous current; nothing in the latter to suggest a sensation. They are incommensurate. But when you conceive convexity, in that fact you conceive concavity also, and *vice versa*. They are related as plus and minus. The objection appeals to analysis of the definition of consciousness or of matter, or challenges the advocate of the theory to study his sensation or his neural process and see if there be in either of them anything of the other.

A difficulty which immediately arises when this challenge is

41. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

42. Hugh S. R. Elliot's *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*, pp. 98 ff.

accepted has been understood to be decisive against the theory. It is this: Any definition of consciousness which the advocate of the theory may propose as the concept to be analyzed must, in order to fulfil the first requirement of logical definition, be in terms of that which is not consciousness. And this seems to the critic to beg the question. If you define consciousness so, he objects, you make its definition imply matter; but there is then nothing of consciousness in it; what you have got is only matter. That is to assume an equation between them. You state the value of x in terms of y , but then you haven't got x , but only y . It is otherwise with terms that really have the correlation you claim for consciousness and matter. Thus you can equate convexity with concavity in terms of either alone, as $m = -(-m)$. In this there is no assumption. But what you say of x is that it equals ay , which is something *distinguishable* from x and whose equality to x is just the problem.

But if it be allowed that the disparity between consciousness and matter must be either a distinction between two kinds of reality, or else the distinction between being and not-being, the predicament just described is worse for the critic of the "double aspect" theory than for its advocate. If the distinction is that of being and not-being, whichever is not-being has an internal constitution and structure by virtue of which parts and relations are recognized within it: matter has physical laws and the interaction of bodies; consciousness has interrelated states. Not-being, so interpreted, is hardly distinguished from being. And if the distinction is within being, and exhausts it, either the connotation of consciousness and that of matter are referable to each other—expressible in terms of each other—or else the distinction is only denotative, and they are not distinguished as *different*; for difference is a discursive relation between differents: *differing* from each other is a case of *referring* to each other.

Excessive emphasis on the "ultimateness" and "absoluteness" of the difference between these two concepts is just the inductive cue that results in the "double aspect" theory. No one can regard consciousness as not different from matter—least of all our critic, who finds them incommensurable. Nay, among real things that are *other* than each other, experience gives us no fellow to such difference; for difference so utter, they that differ should coincide. And so, in the fact of aspect, we have, indeed, in a thousand forms, disparity that matches the difference between the concepts now

before us: *e. g.*, right, left; up, down; plus, minus; convex, concave.

We confess three obvious differences between the two equations which we have taken to represent our critic's conception of the relation of convexity to concavity and the relation of consciousness to matter. In equation (1), which is $m = -(-m)$, representing the former relation, the same symbol m stands on both sides; in equation (2) the symbols are different, x on one side, y on the other. In (1) the coefficient also is the same on both sides, namely unity; in (2) the coefficients are different, unity on one side, a on the other. And in (1) the signs are opposite on the two sides, while in (2) the sign is the same on both sides.

What do these differences mean? To begin with, is (1) monomial and (2) binomial? No; in spite of the fact that there is only one symbol in (1), this equation is binomial in precisely the same sense as (2) is binomial; for it means that a certain attitude toward m , symbolized by the minus sign, transforms m into something *distinguishable from* m . If equation (1) expressed an identity, it would not represent the relation of convexity to concavity, which are not identical but distinguishable. But what is thus expressed in (1) by difference of sign is expressed in (2) by difference of coefficient; for (2) means that a certain attitude toward the entity symbolized by x (an attitude symbolized by the phrase "divide by a ") transforms x into y . In short, the connotation differs, on the two sides, *in both equations alike*. But on the other hand, the denotation is the same on both sides in each equation, for such is the nature of all equations, whether binomial or any other kind. Thus we have identity of denotation with difference of connotation in each of these equations, and they are so far homogeneous with each other. Now connotation is aspect, which is determined by subjective attitude; and attitudes are interrelated in determinate and accurately expressible ways; as, for instance, by antagonism or mutual exclusion, or by any of an indefinite number of forms of implication. The difference of attitude called antipodal oppositeness, or polarity, is the specific difference expressed in equation (1); whereas the coefficient a , in (2), expresses *mere* difference of attitude, difference in general, including, therefore, that specific difference which is expressed by opposition of sign. Thus equation (1) is a case of equation (2).

To sum up: The objection, stated in these algebraic symbols, was this: m implies $-m$; x does not imply y . Express the fact of relief

in terms of m and you have the correlative fact in $-m$ implied in the very definition of m ; while if you express x in terms of y , you have y values, and nothing but y . In short, x and y exclude each other; m and $-m$ imply each other. Our answer is that x implies y just as m implies $-m$; for ay is an aspect of the same denotation as x ; and, since the specificity of every aspect of a given denotation is determinable or definable by relation to all other aspects of the same denotation, any one of such aspects, as x , implies, in its definition, every other, and so y , instead of excluding y .

Turning from such abstract considerations to empirical study of the sensation, the same sort of difficulty reappears. We think we find a dynamic relationship of organic to extra-organic processes; this relationship presents a material aspect, which we call neural activity, and a formal aspect, which we call blue, for instance. But the critic objects that all this is much more than sensation, and that we have read our hypothesis into our data. We must keep to the pure sensation; in that, there is no neural process. So, even as, before, all our attempts to propose a definition of consciousness for analysis were ruled out as begging the question, now every sample of the experience to be observed is rejected as impure. There is no sensation that is pure in such a sense as our critic means, for he means subjectivity that implies no objectivity. If this is more than a word, it is a self-contradiction, since subjectivity is subjectivity only in the fact of correlation with objectivity. Indeed, if our critic were to observe convexity as he proposes that we observe sensation, he would find no implication of concavity in it; nor would he find it convex. His observation would *be* the convexity; the two would coincide, and so would not be two. Convexity in its essence, as convex, would therein no longer be the object of the observation. You have to get outside of your convexity to observe it and its implication of concavity; just so, you have to get outside of your sensation to know it; in it, you know only the object of it. When convexity is said to imply concavity, convexity is just therein not "pure," as the sensation is supposed to be. "Pure" convexity, analogous to "pure" sensation or subjectivity, would be convexity without implication of concavity. That would be zero convexity, so to speak—a self-contradiction. Just so, the "pure" sensation, without implication of objectivity, is a fact of consciousness without the essence of consciousness, which is dynamic related-

ness to an object. "Pure" consciousness is consciousness of nothing, or no consciousness.

If our critic have his way, we have nothing left us to discuss. Let us invite his attention to a discussable phenomenon of our own designating, and definable in some such way as this: the simultaneous belonging of an experience to an organism and to another material fact, say the sky. The two belongings are distinguished by a *sui generis* difference of direction or relational "sense," which unambiguously determines the organism to be the subject of the belonging, the sky the object. We have at least as good a right to call this phenomenon by the name of consciousness, or sensation, as our critic has to name that a sensation which he so defines that its definition is contradicted by the naming.

Now, experience is essentially dynamic, and, for an organism, to be active is to be functionally ordained or focalized. For example, the eye and other parts may be subservient, in different ways and degrees, to the hand. Then the organism is focalized into an organ of touch, of striking, or whatever it may be. Every other function contributes as accessory to this primary function, in the organism's present phase.

We have called consciousness the formal aspect of activity, and we mean by "form" applied to activity what we mean elsewhere, determinateness or definableness. Here, in particular, it is that character which depends on resistance or reactivity. Activity without resistance would be without determination; its character or content would have vanished; it would be activity upon nothing, which, like consciousness of nothing, is nothing. So the resistance that factors in activity is not extraneous to the essence of activity, and consciousness and material processes imply each other not only with the same logical necessity but with the same polar oppositeness of mutual relation, as the aspects of relief.

Consciousness is thus the inversion or reciprocal aspect of organic activity, virtual, in distinction from externalized or real, activity. Where attention is focalized, action is most resisted. As action approaches free vent, consciousness of the object of this free activity becomes more and more evanescent. At the limit where action is unresisted, it and consciousness go out, vanish together, in inverse "sense" or directions. Where action approaches "pure" (*i. e.*, unresisted) activity, pure positivity, pure subjectivity, consciousness approaches "pure" (*i. e.*, unreacting) passivity, pure

negativity, pure objectivity. And such "pure" action and consciousness are pure nothing, action on nothing, sensation of nothing. The vanishing of the two relations together is, in each case, for lack of one of its terms inverse to the term lacking in the other case.

This mutual symmetry between action and consciousness is an implicate of their identity of denotation and mutual inversion of aspect; and any study of the fluctuations and transitions of consciousness, with its modulations of attention and inhibition, is accordingly a study in inverse, a perfect logical function, of corresponding modifications of organic activity; for in the play of the organic functions we shall find incessant modulations between their focalization and their dispersion, incessant shifting of their mutual rank and of the position of primacy among them, to correspond with the changes between margin and focus that are always going on among the elements of consciousness.

The organism is structurally and functionally centralized in a sensori-motor system, where the afferent activity is opposed by the efferent, in a common focus, or in coincident foci, in which action and reaction give form to each other. Here organic reaction has its inception in a preformation, schema or design, as Bergson says, of the developed activity. An intricate manifold of functions are organized: interest determines the ascendancy or primacy of a certain function, while others are subservient, being inhibited or reinforced in varying degrees. The whole complex process has this character of focal, unifying organization, a unity expressed in opposite aspects as the simple form of activity, on the one hand, and as the simple object of perceptive consciousness on the other.

CHAPTER III

DOCTRINE OF FREEDOM

The fallacy of conceptualism, which, as Bergson conceives it, is to substitute space for time as the form of mental existence, has been discussed in the first chapter of *Time and Free Will* in the aspect of applying intensive magnitude, and in the second chapter, numerical multiplicity, to psychic facts. It is the same fallacy which is discussed in the third chapter, in the aspect of applying to them the conception of determinate, causal organization. The outcome of the book is thus that the problem of freedom is just the problem of conceptualism, a problem of philosophic method. This book, *Time and Free Will*, is a manual of instruction for knowing the reality of mental existence; and its object is the *practical* object of indicating the attitude necessary for that purpose. There are two possible attitudes, that of space and that of time, or that of conception and that of intuition. The conceptual is the attitude taken by philosophy universally, to be sure; which explains the futility of all extant discussions of the "persistent problems of philosophy." It is clear, for instance, Monsieur Bergson thinks, that this attitude gives rise, in an automatic and inevitable way, to the problem of freedom—that is, that there would be no such problem but for this false cognitive attitude;—and at the same time that by originating in this unhappy way the problem is necessarily a pseudo-problem, cannot be stated without contradiction. For when you regard mental facts in the spatial or conceptual way, the question automatically arises, how are these facts causally related with other spatial facts? It is a contradiction because by "these" facts you mean non-spatial facts, which, in the nature of causation, can not be causally related with spatial facts, but which, the question presupposes, are so related. Such is the real meaning

of the traditional problem of freedom. The solution, says Bergson, is to cease thinking spatially of that which is temporal; take the other attitude. Once you have done so, the problem vanishes; the causal relation is by definition a spatial relation, and there are no longer two spatial terms to be related. Such determinism is the associationistic conception of mind as an assemblage of distinct, coexistent elements of which the strongest exerts a preponderant influence on the others. Their organization is a mechanical system, and their operations obey the laws of mechanical causation.

As relative (*i. e.* quantitative) intensity is to absolute, qualitative intensity, as juxtaposed multiplicity is to interpenetrating multiplicity, so is determinate organization to organization by free evolution. The categories magnitude, number and cause apply to space. The difference, for Bergson, between space and time is, as we have seen, so absolute that it hardly expresses his theory aright to say that to the above three characters of space three temporal characters *correspond*. Reason seems lacking for any correspondence whatever. This is certain, at any rate: that when intellect makes time an object, and sees it greater or less, divisible and regularly consequential, three things are true about the real, non-objective nature of time, each of which truths manifests itself to intellect, but wrongly, erroneously. Moreover, it is plainly by reasoned, analytic discourse that Bergson discovers that the above intellectual manifestations of time's essence are false. One discovers, furthermore, by this conceptual process, just how they are false, and corrects them with a result so conceptually precise and intelligible that, instead of these three characters falsely spatial, other three are determined as truly temporal. Instead of magnitude, quality has in this way been substituted; instead of multiplicity, indivisible variousness. For cause, the last chapter of the *Essai* substitutes freedom.

We should now be well prepared for divining the nature of the freedom which is consciousness, or more generally, life. The organization of the facts of a given consciousness is such that the person is focally entire in any one of them, even as the entire body functions in each of its functions (cf. page 20). The determinate type of organization is analogous to the mechanically actuated manikin, not to the natural man, even though those fragments which build up the structure of the associationist soul are forces;

for these forces are mutually distinct parts of the soul, whose union in it, and so whose interaction, depends on some principle extrinsic to any of them and is thus wholly determined from without. In the developmental type of organization, on the contrary, the *wholeness* of action is its freedom, rather than independence of what is not itself. Although such independence seems to belong to it, as well, what Bergson is interested to emphasize about the freedom of the free action is that it is the expression of the entire person.

In the domain of life, there is no identity, for there is no permanence—"the same does not remain the same," as Bergson puts it. The ego is not the same ego in any two moments; it is not the same ego that deliberates from moment to moment; and two contradictory feelings that move it are never respectively self-identical in two moments. Indeed, if the case were otherwise, a decision would never be made; the equilibrium of the opposing feelings would never be resolved. Merely by the fact that the person has experienced a feeling, he is modified when a second feeling comes. The feelings are the continually modified ego itself, a dynamic series of states that interpenetrate, reinforce each other and result in a free act by a natural evolution, because it emanates from the entire person.

Such is the character of the free act, a very intelligible character, it would seem, a character lending itself tractably enough to verbal definition, that is, conceptual definition, as a certain relation of act to agent. Yet it must immediately be added that what seems so intelligible and so conceptual an explication of this "certain relation"—what is contained in the two paragraphs preceding—is not regarded by the author as a definition of freedom. It seems that there is a distinction between the formulation of a conception on one hand, and a definition, on the other, though Bergson does not elucidate this distinction explicitly, and I have had to give up the attempt. The distinction is evidently of crucial importance, nevertheless. "We can now formulate our conception of freedom," says the author, on page 219 of *Time and Free Will*. "Freedom is the relation of the concrete self to the act which it performs. This relation is indefinable just because we *are* free. For we can analyze a thing, but not a process; we can break up extensity, but not duration. Or, if we persist in analyzing it, we unconsciously transform the process into a thing, and duration

into extensity . . . and, as we have begun by, so to speak, stereotyping the activity of the self, we see spontaneity settle down into inertia and freedom into necessity. Thus, any positive definition of freedom will ensure the victory of determinism."

The attempt is therefore unwisely made by indeterminists to define freedom by meeting determinists on their own ground when the latter turn the question of freedom into considerations of the relations of the voluntary act to its antecedents, characterizing voluntary activity as essentially foreseeable before, or apodictically intelligible after the fact. When indeterminists permit themselves to be thus ambushed, they commit themselves to the support of determinism, by accepting the deterministic postulate, in the one case that "foreseeable" has intelligible meaning applied to psychic states, which it has not; or, in the other case, that willed acts are intelligible both before and after the fact.

The determinist, that is,—to take the second case first—professes that an act depends in a mechanical way upon certain antecedents. The indeterminist contends that the same antecedents could have resulted in either of several different acts, equally possible. Defenders and opponents of freedom agree in making a kind of mechanical oscillation between two points precede the action. I choose A. The indeterminists say, You have deliberated; then B was possible. The determinists reply, I have chosen; therefore I had some reason to do so, and when B is declared equally possible, this reason is forgotten; one of the conditions of the problem is ignored. Both represent the activity by a deliberative route which divides. Call the point of the division O; then the divisions of the forked line OA and OB symbolize the two divisions which abstraction distinguishes within the continuous activity, of which A is the termination. But while determinists take account of everything, and find that the route MOA has been traversed, their opponents ignore one of the data with which they have constructed the figure; and, after tracing the lines OA and OB, which ought to be united if they are to represent the progression of the ego's activity, they make this progression go back to O and begin oscillating again!

The trouble with both these solutions, Bergson says, is that they presuppose an achieved deliberation and resolution, representable in space by a geometrical figure. The question, Could the ego, having traversed the route MO and decided on A, have chosen B?

is nonsense: to put such a question is to affirm the possibility of adequately representing time by space, succession by simultaneity. It is to attribute to the figure traced the value of an image and not merely of a symbol. Figures represent things, not progressions: how shall a figure furnish the least indication of the concrete motion, of the dynamic progression by which the deliberation results in the act? The defenders of freedom say, The route is not yet traced; therefore one can take any direction. To which we reply, You can speak of a route, in such a connection, only after the action is accomplished, and then it has been traced. The determinists say, The route has been traced *thus*; therefore its possible direction was only that particular direction. To which we reply, Before the route was traced there was no direction, possible or impossible; there could, as yet, be no question of a route. In its lowest terms this merely means: The act, once accomplished, is accomplished; and the argument of the determinists: The act, before being accomplished, was not as yet an act. The question of freedom is not touched, because freedom is a shade or quality of the act itself, not a relation of this act with what it is not nor with what it can be. Deliberation is not oscillation in space; it is dynamic progression, in which the ego and the motives are in a continual becoming, as living beings.

Indeterminists, Professor Bergson says, must beware, again, of arguing against the prevision of voluntary acts. Once more, this is not because prevision of a voluntary act is possible, but because there is no sense in the phrase. If Paul knew all the conditions under which Peter acts, his imagination would relive Peter's history. He must pass through Peter's very own psychic states, to know with precision their intensity and their importance in relation to his other states. The intensity, in fact, is the peculiar quality of the feeling itself. Now, to know *all* the antecedents of the act would bring you to the act itself, which is their continuation, and not merely their result, and above all in no way separate from them. To relive Peter's history is just to become Peter—that is the only way Paul could conceivably “know all the antecedents” of the act in question. There is no question of predicting the act, but simply of acting. Knowledge of the antecedents of the act without knowledge of the act is an absurdity, a contradiction. The indeterminists can mean nothing, by such a contention as this, but that the act is not an act until it is acted—which is hardly

worth meaning;—and the determinists can mean only that the act, once acted, is acted—which is no better. The subject of freedom is beside the point, in such a debate.

So the question of prevision comes to this: Is time spatial? You drew Peter's states, you perceived his life as a marking in space. You then rubbed out, in thought, the part OA, and asked if, knowing the part before O, you could have determined OA beforehand. That is the question you put when you bring in Paul's representation of the conditions (and therefore their materialization) under which Peter shall act. After having identified Paul with Peter, you make Paul take his former point of view, from which he now sees the line MOA complete, having just traced it in the rôle of Peter.

Prevision of natural phenomena has not the slightest analogy with that of a voluntary act. Time, in scientific formulæ, is always and only a number of simultaneities. The intervals may be of any length; they have nothing to do with the calculation. Foreseeing natural phenomena is making them present, or bringing them at least enormously nearer. It is the intervals, the units themselves—just what the physicist has nothing to do with—that interest the psychologist. A feeling half as long would not be the same feeling. But when one asks if a future action can be foreseen, one identifies physical time, which is a number, with real psychological duration, which has no analogy with number. In the region of psychological states there is no appreciable difference between foreseeing, seeing and acting.

According to the mechanical law of causation, the same causes always produce the same effects. But, in the region of psychic states, this law is neither true nor false, but meaningless; for in this region there is no "always:" there is only "once." A repeated feeling is a radically different feeling. It retains the same name only because it corresponds to the same external cause, or is outwardly expressed by analogous signs. It was just said that the ego is not the same in any two moments of its history. It is modified incessantly by the accumulation of its past. One's character at any moment, is the condensation of one's past. Duration acts as a cause; but this temporal or psychological causation has no more analogy with what is called causation in nature than temporal variousness has with number, or intensity with magnitude. A causality which is necessary connection is, at bottom,

identity; the effect is an expression of the cause, as mathematical functions are expressions of each other. But no psychic state has this virtual identity with, or mathematical reducibility to, any other with which it would thus be in the "necessary" kind of causal relation. Such effect is not given in the cause, but is absolutely new.

Time that has passed is an objective thing, and is representable by space; time passing is a subjective process, and is not representable. The free act is the actual passing of time; time in its passing is the very stuff of the existence of freedom. Analyze an act, and you make it a thing. Then its spontaneity is altered into inertia, its freedom into necessity. Hence any definition of freedom makes it determinism. But, though the analysis of the act and the definition of freedom are illusory undertakings, the fundamental fact of freedom remains unassailable by any argument.

Bergson's way of vindicating freedom is thus to find no case against it. Of the positive sort, the only, and sufficient proof is appeal to consciousness. Freedom is an immediate datum of consciousness.

This is confusing to anyone who cannot follow Bergson in his view that subject and object, in actual intuitive consciousness, are indistinguishable, identical. And this fusion of the poles of consciousness while the nature of consciousness not merely suffers nothing but even attains its apogee thereby needs more justification than Bergson has given it. Freedom is a datum of consciousness; but, as undetermined, it must, on Bergson's principles, be consciousness itself—which, indeed, is plainly enough the teaching intended. Freedom is consciousness, then, purely subjective. In what sense is it a datum of consciousness? If it is a datum, is it not an object, of consciousness? It seems a case where, in order to see, you musn't look, lest looking make what is purely subjective an object! This is hardly the case of the fovea and the faint star, where looking *loses* your object; for here, looking rather produces it where no object belongs, or—perhaps one should say—transforms it. Your look, says Gustave Belot,⁴³ congeals and immobilizes it, denatures it like the Gorgon's stare! It is knowable, says Bergson, only by being lived. It is a feeling we have. But the trouble is that, to be

43. *Une théorie nouvelle de la liberté (Les données immédiates)*, in the *Revue Philosophique*, Vol. XXIX (1890), pp. 361-392.

known as undetermined, as freedom, to be even a feeling we have, it is back upon our hands as a datum, as an object.

Before I comment in my own way on the Bergsonian view of freedom, I wish to call to the attention of English readers the keen reaction of this French critic of Bergson. Belot objects to the modest-seeming statement that freedom is a feeling we have. Neither psychology, he thinks, nor common sense, approves.⁴⁴ They establish, on the contrary, a sensible difference between freedom, whatever it may be, and the feeling we have of it—any feeling we can possibly have. Our feeling of freedom is much less variable than our freedom. "We agree not to attribute a veritable practical freedom to the dreaming man, to the somnambulist, to the man affected with some mental disease. Yet the man who, in dream, sees himself act, sees himself free in his action; the somnambulist equally feels himself free and attributes to himself, in his dream, a responsibility that we decline to put upon him, and which he will reject, himself, when he wakes⁴⁵ . . . The furious madman must ordinarily feel himself free in the accomplishment of a murder for which a tribunal will not consent to punish him. The fact is, it suffices, in order that we should feel ourselves free, that our acts should be in harmony with our ideas and our feelings. Now, that may very well be, in the cases of the dreamer, the somnambulist, the madman. . . . They would therefore feel themselves free. But they are not free; for they only act from an incomplete consciousness; and a great number of elements of their normal ego, which would permit the revision, the correction, the inhibition, are lacking." A glimmering of the fact of one's madness is a token of the only residuum there is of freedom. "It is to conserve some freedom. to perceive that one no longer is master of oneself."

Bergson is alive to all this—sometimes, as when he says that the freedom of a free action is its *entirety*, its expression of the total personality. But Belot is quite justified in charging him with forgetting it, for only by forgetting it could he conceive of freedom as an immediate datum of consciousness. It is, indeed, far from the case that our freedom is nothing but the feeling we have of it, or that it is proportional to this feeling. What is so altered by the

44. *Op. cit.*, p. 368.

45. The feeling of guilt, and, so, of responsibility and freedom, can be crushing in dreams, as anyone knows who is given to appearing in dream public indecently clothed, or not clothed at all.

determinist habit of mind, by the conceptual attitude toward will, is not at all one's feeling of freedom, but only one's interpretation of it. An immediate, spontaneous feeling, being prior to theory and analysis, is safe from any influence from them. In the most incorrigible determinist, consciousness of the wish, other things equal, is exactly the same as in the most incorruptible indeterminist.

Precise determination of will is not only not contrary to freedom but is indispensable to it. Minimizing the value of motive in activity is loss, not gain, to freedom. The motive is what connects our act to our whole personality, and makes it ours. Without this connection, we are not free; its interruption is a limitation, not the condition, of freedom. And indeed freedom is so limited by the mass of our unreflecting impulses. Bergson is right in saying that we are rarely free. But therefore he is wrong in saying that freedom is the mere spontaneity of the ego.

In a certain passage⁴⁶ Bergson describes freedom in a way which seems almost explicitly to deny the doctrine that it is the entirety of will. Here it is a revolution of one part of the self against the rest, far from emanating from the total self. And such revolution, just so far as it is purely spontaneous, or arbitrary, is irresponsible instead of free. Just so far, on the other hand, as it is not arbitrary, it is determined. In fact, however, appearance of arbitrariness argues nothing about determination except that one is ignorant about it.

In showing the absurdity of all argumentation for or against the determination of a future voluntary act by present conditions, the considerations offered by Bergson are almost perfect proof of such determination. The reason we cannot think another's thought without disfiguring it is just that the conditions of the thought, and so of the act, are not all reunited. The act, then, is supposed to depend on these conditions. Now, an absolute present is a fiction; each moment of the true duration of consciousness is a commencement and an achievement. Determination is nothing but that intimate connection of events which prevents us from isolating an absolute present. The case of Peter and Paul then, proves only that foresight could not be adequate to determination, not that determination is absent. The inability of even the author

46. *Time and Free Will*, p. 158.

of an act to foresee it is no criterion of its freedom. Any free acts of our own that we do foresee, we foresee as connected with our present state, as ours, in fact; it is that which makes their freedom, but that supposes also their determination. This foresight, it may be said, is always insufficient and imperfect. So much the worse for freedom, not the better. It is thereby limited, not made. There are, indeed, always events outside of us that baffle our calculations, as well as unconscious tendencies, unperceived forces within us, indistinctly developing beneath the reflective and clear-seeing ego (Bergson calls this the superficial, *Belot* the higher ego) which suddenly break out, rout it and upset it. Such civil war is anything but freedom.

The uniqueness of psychic states, whether free or not, neither exempts them from determination nor even differentiates them from physical states. That a psychic state is not reproducible Bergson shows to be because the past, incessantly accumulating and modifying itself, is never the same in two moments. A clearer statement of the solidarity of past and present—*i. e.* of determination—could not be made. It may well be true that in the physical as well as in the moral world, every individual is without counterpart; it is none the less a product of nature, for its uniqueness; and, as a product of nature, determined, in its own uniqueness, by nature. Among our most unique acts, the most original are far from being the freest. The eccentricities of the madman are more original than the sober doings of the rational, but not so free. The more enlightened men are, the freer; but the more they do and think the same thing. Their divergences come from their ignorances and their unconsciousness, which are also the limits of their freedom. It is the same with them as with nature: it is when it produces monsters that it is most new, but it is then also that it has been least free, most constrained in its doings.

Monsieur Bergson has not done away with psychological determinism; but if he had, he would have hindered freedom rather than helped it. But the problem is not purely psychological; it is psycho-physical. We are at once body and consciousness. A freedom which were not exerted in the outer world would be absolutely nominal and illusory; and in order to manifest itself therein, it must be accompanied by physical processes. These too, then, if determinism is contrary to freedom, must be exempt from determination.

Bergson's denial of psycho-physical parallelism⁴⁷ is no gain for freedom. If no external effect is essentially involved in a volition, the volition is impotent—which is surely not to be free. Nor would it be characteristic of freedom to have activities going on in the organism without the avowal of consciousness. So far as we do possess such unconscious goings-on, we are absolutely passive to their operation. Psycho-physiological parallelism⁴⁸ is a condition of freedom, not its negation. Some sort of correspondence is necessary to the feeling of freedom, and in that case freedom cannot dispense with determinism in nature, at least. One might, perhaps, suppose a preestablished harmony between a contingency (the moral world) and a determinism (the physical); it would be easier to suppose it between two determinisms; but between two contingencies—that is too much to ask!

Suppose, then, the ability of mind to produce, veritably cause physical modifications. Suppose an energy not subject to calculation. But how shall we ever know such an energy in the external world? All that is spatial is calculable, if number is derived from space. How could an energy, then, be manifest in the physical universe, *i. e.* in space, without being thereby subjected to the same forms of quantity and to the requirements of calculation?

Bergson's attempt to repudiate the problem of determinism, as a pseudo-problem, results in his vacillation between the two sides of the controversy. Sometimes he accepts the solidarity of our acts with the rest of our conscious life, sometimes he denies it; which is to vindicate freedom sometimes by determinism, sometimes by indeterminism. In the beginning he founds freedom in the mutual penetration of the states of consciousness; even sensation is a commencement of freedom, because it embraces "the sketching and, as it were, prefiguring of the future automatic movements;"⁴⁹ and the free act is defined as that which "springs from the self"⁵⁰ without intervention of anything strange. Then, little by little, the contrary thesis takes the upper hand: the act of

47. *Matter and Memory*, p. x; also an article entitled *Le paralogisme psycho-physiologique* in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, Vol. XII (1904), pp. 895-908. This article is also in the *Rapports et comptes rendus du deuxième congrès international de philosophie*, 1903, Part I.

48. The causal relation between mental and cerebral states—*i. e.* interaction—would be an alternative "condition of freedom;" but this relation is included in Bergson's denial of any sort of correspondence or equivalence (such as the quantitative equivalence of causation) between states of brain and states of mind.

49. *Time and Free Will*, p. 34.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

will becomes a *coup d'état*; "the successive moments of real time are not bound up with one another;⁵¹ the dynamic conception supposes "that the future is not more closely bound up with the present in the external world than it is in our own inner life."⁵² Bergson maintains, to be sure, that solidarity can be admitted between the past and the present and denied between present and future. Once the event happens it is indeed necessary that we should be able to explain it, and we can always do so by plausible reasons. But this connection is established after the fact for the satisfaction of our discursive reason. The past is fixed, it cannot *not have been*; it has become a *thing*, under the domain of the understanding and of analysis. Whereas, at the moment of enactment, the activity is a *process*, and so not capable of analysis. When the route is traced, we can analyze its directions and windings, but it is not traced in advance of being traced; it is the tracing that makes the route, not the route that determines the tracing. You can explain what is given, but there is no explaining what is not given.

Bergson, however, does not keep this point of view. The future, we have just seen, is "prefigured" in the present. Then it is as necessary to the feeling of our freedom to be able to connect our future to our present in our decision, as to be able, once the act is accomplished, to give account of it by reasons drawn from our consciousness. Bergson's thought vacillates this way because he attributes two incompatible characters to the inner life, qualitative heterogeneity and mutual penetration of its states. Grant the heterogeneity and you have an infinitesimal dust, the very denial of connection and penetration. If the states penetrate there are always two near enough to each other in quality to form an identical whole, while they differ only in degree, as two very near shades of the same color. But then there is a quantitative, and so a homogeneous, aspect of the inner life.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

CHAPTER IV

BERGSON'S ABHORRENCE OF DETERMINATENESS

A deep, temperamental abhorrence of determinateness—that is the motive of Bergsonism. By admission of Bergson, any object of the mind is determinate. But therefore a philosophy that repudiates determinateness in the nature of reality is ineffable because it is objectless. It is ineffable also because any reason offered for the indeterminateness of reality is determination of it. The dread of determinateness is the dread of reason, of explanation, of interpretation—in a word, of philosophy. A consciousness which can 'testify that we are free' is not an objectless consciousness; and freedom, if consciousness can testify to it, cannot be an indeterminate nor an immediate (*i. e.* unobjectified) datum of consciousness. Bergson's position is that it is essential to the true nature of reality *in itself*, under whatever aspect—*e. g.* duration, motion, freedom etc.—to be subjective; and that this is why Zeno is right in finding motion, for instance, unthinkable; for "unthinkable" properly means (though it did not mean, for Zeno) incapable of becoming objective. This to say, is it not, that the true nature of reality independently of all point of view is to be viewed from a certain point! It comes to this, at least, if to be subjective is compatible with being known in any sense, with being contained within consciousness at all. Otherwise it comes to the skeptical (and self-contradictory) doctrine that it is essential to the true nature of reality to be unknowable in every sense. The former, of course, is Bergson's view regarding subjectivity.⁵³

The anti-intellectualist doctrine, however, that data of consciousness cannot be understood, conceptualized, defined, or even

53. *Time and Free Will*, p. 83.

named—cannot, in short, be objectified—without contradiction is as important for the problem of knowledge as it is for the problem of freedom. Professor Perry's analysis of immediatism⁵⁴ shows the misunderstanding of what it is to conceptualize, which underlies such a doctrine. The anti-intellectualist idea seems to be that the concept is static, and common to more than one consciousness, and universal in its denotation, and sharply discrete; and that for these reasons it could not correspond to what is fluid and private and uniquely particular and continuous. It is evidently the "copy theory" of knowledge, which unconsciously determines this criticism of the concept. Concepts are invalid, applied to life, *because they are not like living objects!* "You cannot make continuous being out of discontinuities," is James's criticism.⁵⁵ And Bergson's: "Instead of a flux of fleeting shades merging into each other [intellect] perceives distinct and, so to speak, *solid* colors, set side by side like the beads of a necklace."⁵⁶ But, as Perry shows, to conceptualize is nothing like this procedure. Conception is *substitution* of one object of immediate consciousness which is conveniently abstract, for another object which is, in the circumstances of the conceiving, inconvenient in its concrete fulness. All that is necessary in order that this substitutional mode of consciousness should be valid and true knowledge of the object so symbolized, is that the substitute should *mean* that object. And that it can and does mean it when the object is a subjective state is no more than the fact that, on Bergson's own showing, such states are symbolized. For to mean is essentially to symbolize. Certainly no one concept is a rounded-out exhaustive awareness, so to speak, of the symbolized object. But this is no more than to say that conceiving is a selective and eliminating mode of consciousness—which does not distinguish it from any other mode, the most immediate and intuitive possible state of genuine significant consciousness being essentially as much an elimination as a positing.

Since, then, a symbol never has (just by reason of its function as symbol) the same structure as the object symbolized, there is nothing either in the immobility, or the publicity, or the universality, or the discreteness of any concept, or in its inclusion of all these characters, to prevent its validly meaning the fluid and private

54. *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, Chapter X, section 6.

55. *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 236. Quoted from Professor Perry's work, named above.

56. *Creative Evolution*, p. 3.

and particular and continuous. And the real must necessarily have the conceptual characters, since the characters correlative to them, alone regarded by Bergson as characters of reality, have no meaning *except correlatively* to the conceptual characters. Thus "fluidity of nothing" is a phrase without meaning. The something which is fluid, requires, in order that *fluidity* as such shall be a datum of experience, a coefficient aspect of immobility. It is not fluidity that flows. The immobile, snap-shot conceptual form—not only does this *belong* to the cataract, as the possibility of photographing it proves, but this very form is indispensable to the fact of flow in its genuine concreteness. As for uniqueness, a fact so unique that it is like nothing else in any respect, could not be discriminated. The bare discernibleness of a datum requires a basis of discrimination which is common to it and to that from which it is discriminated. Continuity is analogous with unity, and has no meaning if there is no aspect, in it, of composition, and so of discreteness, as unity is nothing if not union of a plurality. That the real has the aspects eulogistically favored by intuitionism is beyond question. That it has not the complementary conceptual aspects is demonstrably false, and is an illusion of "exclusive particularity," explainable only by that prepossession with a certain abstract view, whose psychological origin has been repeatedly noted in this study.

Is it not truly a paradox to give the unnamable a long list of names—life, consciousness, freedom, duration, intensity, quality, heterogeneity etc.—and to write a book, whether practical or speculative, concerning that which will not articulate into discourse, (cf. above, p. 54-5), employing these names on every page; and to conclude with a studied definition of freedom; and to avow that the purpose of it all is to make the fact understood that the subject-matter cannot even be named, still less defined or discoursed about or understood? It seems improper to consider that the book is *about* such a subject, and yet necessary to suppose that it is about some subject, and impossible to assign another. If it is true that, in seeming to name this subject, you are deluded; that, in trying to talk about it, you fail, and name and talk about something else, instead, its spatialized symbol—then the conclusion is perfectly valid that such a book is a case of this delusion. And the trouble lies in that reifying of the coefficients of reality and of consciousness which is the condition of a philosophy of "pure"

intuition (cf. page 29). To suppose that genuine cases of awareness can be either pure intuition or pure conception is to reify these coefficient aspects of consciousness, which are as truly *both* indispensable for the genuine concreteness of an actual case of awareness as are the positive sine and cosine for the real acuteness of an angle (*i. e.* for the angle to enclose acutely space revolved-through). As the zero point of either trigonometric projection is the vanishing-point of the entity of whose nature they are coefficient functions, so the "purity" of either coefficient function of consciousness is the vanishing of any real awareness.⁵⁷

If no logical reason impugns the validity of conceptual knowledge of subjective states, no more does the pragmatic test discredit such knowledge. It is as good, genuine knowledge in its satisfaction of vital interest as the sensation, say, which is the object of the state in question. Helen Keller, incapable of the sensation blue, knows the sensation—conceptually alone, of necessity—rather better, even, it may be, than she would ever have known it if her life had been more occupied in the knowing of blue—and other such—*things*; better, at any rate, certainly, than most people know it. All this knowledge can be is a rationalizing of "blue:" she can name it, define it, understand it, make articulate and significant statements about it. The intellectual mode of knowing blue is thoroughly significant. It finds blue in experience, and enables the conscious subject to identify this object when she comes across it. By this knowledge, blue is part of the currency of Helen Keller's social commerce. It is a factor in her life, with its importance and interest. Obviously, she can have got it only by conceptualizing it.

Of course the proposition that consciousness is indefinable has the same futility as the proposition that it is unnamable; because, indeed, they have the same meaning. The meaning, we have seen, is that, in trying to name or define what is fluid, private, etc., there is a miscarriage; it is something else that gets named or defined, to wit the representative or symbol of what was aimed at. This symbol, being fixed and public, is able to lend itself to application of the fixed and public name or concept. But we have also seen that a name is only a symbol; an unnamable thing could not be symbolized. If, by hypothesis, it *is* symbolized, it is therein namable.

57. The analogy holds even in the oppositeness of direction in which the evanishment, in the limiting cases, occurs (cf. above, pp. 72, 80).

But naming a thing is *ipso facto* relating it, for it is associating it with something else, its name or symbol; in naming the thing you have started upon the process of defining it, which is the infinite process of relating it or understanding it. Exempting things from naming or definition, sequestering them from the rational domain, is like setting a limit to space. Sequestering from the rational domain is relating to it, and that is putting into it.

If the illusion in trying to name and define mental states is due to their fluidity and privacy, by the same token the same treatment of physical objects, which Bergson regards as valid treatment, is in fact equally illusory. To be sure, physical objects have not, according to the author, the flow of duration, but they are even less dependable creatures than mental states, for in every new moment they are something absolutely other than anything which was in the moment before. Besides which, in spite of this really incessant instantaneity, something, not explained, causes them, upon the "intersection" of our duration with them, to *appear* to us to be self-identical but changed, even as we ourselves. Physical objects are not fixed. One finds no exceptions in nature to the universal law of change; and the state of any physical thing at a given moment is the outcome, in continuity, of its previous states, to an indefinite regress of antecedents, quite as the case stands with the ego. In respect to duration, discriminating between physical and mental is not valid. Even between organic and inorganic matter or between conscious and unconscious organisms the difference is only one of degree or tempo of change. But if so, it is arbitrary, if one regards the present state of the conscious organism as embodying the whole of its past, to deny this of the stick and the stone. Of course mental states are not permanent; subjects, objects—nothing is permanent that has existence. Nothing stays as it is. The scope of naming and defining is not limited by permanence. Neither, however, is the flux of nature chaos, that it should not be understandable. Change, on the contrary, is the manifestation of law, in the time of Heraclitus, now, and forever.

Privacy or uniqueness is no more obstructive to understanding than is change, and, like change, has no peculiar applicability to mental states as matter of knowledge. Privacy or uniqueness applies to physical objects of knowledge in essentially the same way as it applies to mental states. Mere accessibility is, in prin-

ciple, common for all objects of knowledge, to all subjects.⁵⁸ But there is a special reason why the subject of the state is particularly disqualified, as compared with others, for knowing his state immediately, *i. e.* intuitively; namely, that, at the time of the existence of the state, when, alone, it could be known intuitively, he is mainly occupied with another object of knowledge, the object of the state in question. You do not, then, know a mental state best by living it, or rather *in* living it; your knowledge of it is just then at its worst, since you are then preoccupied in knowing something else. The state, as an attribute of the subject, is clearly one of the subject's relations, and, so, conceptually distinct from either term. It cannot be at once a knowledge and the object of that same knowledge. Bergson's treatment of the conscious state conceives it in just that way—as if the relation were itself one of its own terms, the object.

Knowing a mental state can only mean understanding it. It is not a concrete datum, like the sky, but an abstraction from the relationship in which the subject and the sky function as terms. One does not intuitively know the subjective process of blueness, in looking at the sky; one knows the sky in that sense, but the process only conceptually, by reflection. Is it any less an authentic object of knowledge? Is it not itself—is it any symbol of itself?—which you name and define and talk about and understand?

The practical significance of saying that one felt and now remembers a feeling is not that the feeling is what one ever felt. Feeling Number One is not an object for feeling Number Two, neither during Number One nor afterward, in reminiscent feeling. So far as the reminiscent state is another intuition, its object is the same as that of the intuition remembered—so far. But to be reminiscent, a conscious state must reflect upon, or refer to, a conscious state distinct from itself. This reflective reference is a conceptual co-element together with the intuitional character of the reminiscent state. So far as the memory is reflective, consciousness is oriented toward the original state itself as a fact, a process, conceptually distinguishable from the object of it. It is thus only *so far as conceptual* that subjective processes can be objects of knowledge, or, in short, be known. But if so, Bergson is wrong in two essential points: in denying that subjectivity can be objectified, and in

58. Cf. Perry's analysis of subjective privacy, in Chapter XII of *Present Philosophical Tendencies*.

affirming that knowledge of subjectivity is immediate (*i. e.* non-conceptual) or intuitive.

Any reminiscent state, like every other conscious state, undoubtedly *is* intuitive in a certain degree. The calmest reflection on an originally affective experience is tintured with a rudimentary fluttering of the old feeling; just as, on the other hand, the most violent early repetitions of a tempestuous joy or grief must relate, in order to be reminiscent, to the original experience. No one else, it may be said, can *appreciate* my feeling as I do, myself: this appreciation is no conceptualization of that feeling. This is only to say that the affective as well as the representative aspect of any conscious state is unique for each subjective center of interest. But privacy no more distinguishes subjectivity from objectivity than does change. Every object, being self-identical, is unique, its quality private. Inasmuch as each conscious subject is a distinct center of interest as well as a distinct cognitive subject, the affective value of a state of a given subject must also be theoretically unique for that subject. But the state is nevertheless objective and common as well as subjective and private, since in fact it is an object for understanding. My state of mind is as accessible to your understanding as your own (it may be more so, to be sure). The understanding names the intuitive state—anybody's at all, indifferently, one's own or another's— as truly as it names any other relationship or process, by virtue of its conceptual coefficient; and as truly relates it to the rest of the rational universe, therein understanding and defining it.

The derivation of the three heterologies elucidated in the three chapters of the *Essai*, is the inevitable consequence of the fundamental heterology of an "absolutely" two-fold universe. The intensity of mental states could not be homogeneous, for Bergson, the variousness that belongs to them could not be plural, their organization could not be determinate, because then they would be objective, *by his definition* of objectivity. But why may a subjective state not be an objective state? To the conceptualist, to whom these terms are abstract concepts, points of view, discursive contexts, there is no reason at all. To Professor Bergson, who does what he accuses conceptualism of doing, namely substituting concepts for concrete realities, it is a contradiction, for one concrete reality cannot be another. But a concrete reality which, for a certain purpose and in a certain context, one symbolizes by the

term "subjective state," may very well be the same concrete reality which, for another purpose, one symbolizes by the phrase "objective state."

We have seen that intensity which is "pure," pure quality, is pure nothing, being quality of nothing; since, if it is quality of anything, it has its quantitative coefficient, which destroys its purity. So variousness which is "pure" heterogeneity, is not even various, but "nothing" again. For it is "interpenetrating" instead of "juxtaposed" or impenetrable heterogeneity. But impenetrability is just identity, as Bergson remarks;⁵⁹ it is a logical principle rather than a physical law. That two bodies cannot occupy the same space and time means that they would therein not be two, or coexistent. Now, interpenetration in any rigorous sense, any but the loose colloquial sense of small division and uniform diffusion, is the mere contradiction of impenetrability or identity. It means that two bodies do occupy the same space at the same time. If, then, this law of interpenetration thus means to require (in the subject) the relation of coexistence, and also (in the predicate) to forbid it—in other words, if it is contradictory to itself—mental states can obey it no better than pebbles. And, finally, non-quantitative causality is a third contradiction, since its "pure" heterogeneity destroys its continuity in time as well as in space (cf. above, page 93).

How can any of these three pairs of heterologous principles of space and time be "absolutely" different if, however different, each pair have such essential community of nature that both must be called by one name and thought under one category, as two species of the same genus? For, in spite of all their differences, they are, throughout the discussion, two kinds of intensity, of multiplicity, of causation.

59. *Time and Free Will*, p. 88.

CHAPTER V

THE MYSTICAL YEARNING OF INTUITIONISM

I will conclude these comments on Professor Bergson's teaching by noting the mystical nature of the central idea of his epistemology, the identification of subject and object. The yearning for a more intimate acquaintance with the thing-in-itself, for a knowledge truer and more searching than the "practical" and "useful" reactive relations which we bear to our "phenomenal" objects—as if such experience were unworthy the sacred name of knowledge—this, the prime aspiration of the intuitional philosophy of Bergson, reduces to a futile, if not a morbid, yearning after self-contradiction. The more you know a thing "in itself," the more you "internalize" your relation to it—in short, the more you identify yourself with it—the less you bear any significant relation to it at all, any relation, obviously, but that of identity; the less, notably, you bear the active and cognitive relations toward it. The indispensable condition of Paul's knowing Peter is that Paul should *not* become Peter. Things can neither be nor be conceived except in *some* relations, any more than relations without terms. If you know the thing in its relations, you know the thing as much in itself as a thing is capable of *being*.

"You show," writes Professor Bergson, in the letter quoted before, "that perfect intuitive knowledge, as I mean it, would consist in coincidence with the object known; but that then there would no longer be knowledge of any object, since only the object remains.—Yet, in the case of an entirely free action, *i. e.* an act in which the entire person takes part, one is *altogether* in what he is doing; one has, at the same time, consciousness of what he is doing; and yet he is not duplicated in observing his own activity, absorbed as he is in the act itself: here to act and to know (or rather to

possess) are one and the same thing. Intelligence, always outside of what it observes, cannot conceive of knowledge without distinctness of subject and object. It is intelligence that propounds your dilemma: 'Either there is knowledge of the object, hence distinctness of object and subject; or subject coincides with object, and then there is only object: knowledge vanishes.'—But reality does not accept this dilemma. It presents us, in the case cited, subject and object as a single indivisible reality, action and knowledge of the action as a single indivisible reality, of which intelligence *subsequently* takes two points of view, that of object and that of subject, that of action without knowledge and that of pure knowledge. We have no right to set up these *points of view* of reality as *constitutive elements* of reality itself."

The last sentence accuses me of doing what I am most zealous to show is the foundation fallacy of intuitionism! I have been contending that, when Monsieur Bergson says that subjectivity cannot be objectified, he is speaking as if "objectifying," instead of meaning to take a point of view, means to alter the reality symbolized by the word "subjectivity." (Of course the question concerns concrete cases of subjectivity, the intuitionist contending that a given subjective state cannot be objectified—*i. e.* named, defined, etc.) Now, this seems to me precisely to "set up a point of view of reality as a constitutive element of reality itself." But intuitionism does even worse than this. Having set up this point of view of reality, and treated it in this concrete way, and worshipped it as the Absolute, it snubs that other point of view, which, by the very nature of the genuinely concrete reality, is coördinate with the deified abstraction, its brother and peer. The object has "such reality as that of rest, which is the negation of motion," the absolute and positive; "yet it is not absolute naught."

It seems to me that Bergson virtually admits the impossibility of the coincidence of subject and object when he says that instinct and intellect are neither possibly pure, which is deeply true. But then an action "completely free" is only a limiting case, is it not?—a case which would put the action out of relation and so out of activity? In a certain obvious sense "the whole person takes part," perhaps, in *any* action; but I cannot imagine any action or state that could be other than a relation between object and subject. I cannot see how perfect self-expression in one's act makes in any degree for obliteration of ontological distinctness

between agent and patient, subject and object. How may action be conceived to dispense with reaction? How deny its relational character, then, without denying its activity—in short, without contradiction? “Perfect self-expression” distinguishes certain acts, no doubt, but the distinction is ethical, denoting a teleological harmony, not a metaphysical identity between subject and object.

To say that one *is* completely one’s act and yet *knows* his act again confuses a relation with one of its terms. Is it merely a matter of taste to choose to say that such a state—*i. e.* perfect absorption in one’s act—is *not knowledge* of the act just in so far as it is the act? Is it not necessary to distinguish between the subject’s relation to the act, on one hand, and to those things, on the other (which are neither subject nor act) entering, together with the subject, into the act? Those things, it seems to me, are the object, and the act itself a relation between the subject and them, a relation which wears a conscious as well as an active aspect, and which, as knowledge, is knowledge of the things, not of the act, not of itself.

PART THREE
BERGSON'S GENIUS



BERGSON'S GENIUS

Logical soundness is never amiss, and is notably desirable in a philosopher; but Professor Bergson is assuredly right in thinking that it is no measure of a philosopher's genius. One's feeling about the fallacies of Spinoza and Berkeley and Kant may pale almost into indifference, in the enthusiasm of following such heroic feats of insight.

But then, it would seem, their greatness is their *insight*, and not their logic, and insight therefore, after all, is philosophical genius.

We have seen that this is Professor Bergson's conclusion. It can be interpreted in a sense that is valid, of course: all depends on the meaning of "insight." I have insisted sufficiently on the reasons why I cannot think Professor Bergson's interpretation of it is valid. It is a case in which the etymological and the actual meaning of a word, in a certain context, differ and so give rise to ambiguity. The word "intuition," etymologically, means just "insight." But then it means consciousness functioning most completely, least abstractly. Now, Bergsonian "intuition" is a conception so far from concrete completeness that almost the primary object of his philosophy is the demarcation of intuition from any actual state of which consciousness is normally capable. It is true that Bergson insists that consciousness, in a supernormal effort, is capable of the purely intuitive act, and that in the capacity for this feat of knowing lies all the hope of metaphysics. This is the ground principle of Bergsonism, and I have nothing to add here, concerning its merits. In a word, its fallacy is the fallacy of reification. No such feat of consciousness is possible, not because it is more than the limited power of actual mind can compass, but because it is a contradiction, since it is consciousness without object, which is consciousness of nothing.

The Bergsonian will object that, if Bergsonian "intuition" is abstract, no less abstract is intellect; and, if philosophy is insight,—consciousness most complete,—the thesis contrary to intuitionism, that philosophy is intellectual judgment, is a case of the same fallacy that has been charged to intuitionism, and is inconsistent with the admission that philosophy is essentially an insight which involves more than intellect.

The answer is first, that intellectualism, unlike intuitionism, regards philosophy as indeed an abstract interest, and for that reason as not separable from the living of a life which supports this interest in a larger total interest; but, also for that reason, as not possibly identical, either with life entire or with any interest, such as the aesthetic, of like abstractness with philosophy. The answer to the second part of the objection is that an insight which is more than intellect is not for that reason without its intellectual aspect. Consciousness is always significant, certainly; but if it has any meaning, if it is significant, it is, in that fact, intellectual. And insight without meaning is a contradiction, and is assuredly not philosophy. The appearance of inconsistency arises from the unconscious identifying of insight with intuition in the falsely reified sense. Insight in any such sense philosophy certainly is not. And yet the intellectualist may properly attribute the greatness of a philosophy to its insight rather than to its logical cogency, since cogent logic may be dull and shallow and therefore not great. It is great if it is far-seeing and deep. There is analytic insight, as well as intuitive.

After all is said, the feeling that even serious lapse of logic may not be sufficient to destroy the value of a great philosophy is not the same as the opinion that logic is immaterial to that value. No one, I dare say,—intuitionist, intellectualist or anyone else—ever thought this. The genius of a great philosophy is a superior perspicacity in the recognition of the significance of problems, a superior discernment of the problematic as such. "The earliest philosophers" says Professor James,⁶⁰ . . . were just men curious beyond immediate practical needs, and no particular problems, but rather the problematic generally, was their specialty." But the perspicacity which sees the meaning and bearings of a problem cannot fail to attack its further interpretation with a superior freshness and originality. And the interpretation of a

60. *Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 10.

problem, carried to the end, is its only solution. Genius in philosophy thus also turns into superior richness of suggestion in the solutions which it invents. Inasmuch as the problem-putting and the problem-solving processes are continuous with each other, and in this important sense one and the same thing, it should be expected that philosophical genius would possess both virtues, in any actual instance. And no doubt this is the historical fact. On any view it is suggestiveness, fertility, which is the measure of philosophical genius. And it seems to the intellectualist that the possibility of philosophical fertility depends on a discursive, intellectual co-implication of the parts of the realm of truth.

But although these two phases of philosophical genius—the problem-putting and the problem-solving phases—have so intimate a relation with each other, they can and do appear in different emphases in different philosophers. The emphasis in any particular case is undoubtedly determined in part from without, notably by the philosopher's epochal relations. Thales is greater, as well as more momentous historically, in his *quest* of an ἀρχή than in the consummation of the quest. With Hegel's material to work upon, the emphasis in Thales' genius would have been proportionately modified. And if Bergson has not, like Thales, unearthed new problems, that is nothing, for the question of the value of his work.

Indeed, the historical momentousness of a philosophy is quite largely independent of its intrinsic merit in either of these senses, or in any sense. Conditions which contribute to the vogue and influence of a philosophy are many, some obvious enough, others more recondite. The question of historical momentousness is thus only partly germane to an estimate of a philosophy's own intrinsic worth; and, in the case of a contemporary philosophy, is in the nature of things (while the history is yet to be made) an almost unmitigated speculation. Such speculation regarding Bergson is no part of the present purpose.

One word more—before undertaking to appraise the genius of Bergson—as to the motive of such an undertaking in this particular essay. It is no part of the primary object of the essay. That object is the very impersonal one of understanding his doctrine. If logical fallacies are in any sense or degree irrelevant to the value of a philosophy, it is nevertheless a method of studying a philosophical work which is not without its value, to square it with

logical principles. When the philosophy under criticism is already a classic, the omission of appreciative comment needs no apology, just because the merit of the work is beyond dispute. On Platonism and on Kantism much valuable light has been thrown in this severe way. In studies so occupied, disquisition on the immortal inspiration of the vision bequeathed to mankind in syllogisms which sometimes halt would not have enhanced the value of the study.

When our philosopher is a contemporary, the case is different in that then personal predilection and prejudice are without the regulation imposed by historical perspective; and injustice, even negative or privative, either to the living philosopher or to his living antagonists, has a certain human import of which the conditions are removed with mere temporal remoteness of the subject of study, when history has placed him in a setting which includes an "after" as well as a "before."

Professor A. D. Lindsay has pointed out⁶¹ that, in one important respect, Bergson's genius is of the Kantian kind. It is capacity for such interpretation of old problems that they become veritably renewed. "It is a great and essential proof of cleverness or insight," said Kant, "to know how to ask reasonable questions." Now, comments Professor Lindsay (without suggesting any comparison in importance between Kant and Bergson), there is this resemblance between them, that much of the interest of Bergson's work, as of Kant's, consists in statement and exposition of antinomies in philosophy. Like Kant's, Bergson's philosophy is interesting because it is a new method, and, in the same sense as Kant's, is a critical philosophy, for it consists in finding the main source of previous difficulties in uncriticized false assumptions.

Such criticism of the question ("interpretation of the problem" I called it above) is just the proper business of the philosopher. For, every question is also an unconditional assertion. Falseness in this implied assertion is a case of the fallacy of "many questions," which, accordingly, may be regarded as the philosopher's first concern.

Bergson is a philosopher preeminently in this sense. He is a philosopher also (in spite of the cavalier denial of Sir E. Ray Lanke-

61. *The Philosophy of Bergson*, pp. 1, 2, 3.

ter)⁶² in that he is a man with an articulate conviction concerning the nature of being and of knowledge. In the aspersion of Bergson's thought by the above writer and by Mr. Hugh S. R. Elliot,⁶³ there is a rancour which, in spite of much valid criticism in detail, produces an impression of ill-regulated prejudice.

This impression is no more than fairly counterbalanced by the contrary enthusiasm of such whole-souled votaries of Bergsonism as Edouard LeRoy, William James and H. Wildon Carr.

"There is a thinker," writes M. LeRoy, "who is deemed by acknowledged philosophers worthy of comparison with the greatest.

. . . Beyond any doubt, and by common consent, Mr. Henri Bergson's work will appear to future eyes among the most characteristic, fertile and glorious of our era. It marks a never-to-be-forgotten date in history; it opens up a phase of metaphysical thought, it lays down a principle of development the limits of which are indeterminable; and it is after cool consideration, with full consciousness of the exact value of words, that we are able to pronounce the revolution which it effects equal in importance to that effected by Kant, or even by Socrates."⁶⁴ It is a "profoundly original doctrine." And of endless fertility: "There is no doctrine . . . which is more open, and none which . . . lends itself to further extension." Again: ". . . a doctrine which admits of infinite development . . . a work of such profound thought that the least passing example employed takes its place as a particular study."⁶⁵ And so on *ad libitum*.

These are the glowing words of an ardent disciple (even though not a pupil) and may be expected to be not, after all, altogether regulated by a "full consciousness of the exact value of words." Such phrases as "worthy of comparison with the greatest," "beyond any doubt," "by common consent," are pleasantly vague, and should not offend any judgment that is not literal in season and out of season. As to the Bergsonian "revolution," it should offend no one at all who can put up with an expression of purely speculative relish. So far, on the other hand, as this revolution is accomplished fact in the prime of our philosopher's middle age, the mention of Socrates and Kant does savour of the ornate!

62. *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*, pp. vii, viii.

63. *Op. cit.*, *passim*.

64. *The New Philosophy of Henri Bergson*, pp. 1 and 2.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 230.

Bergson is at least preeminent over all other living philosophers as the expression of a very revolutionary *Zeitgeist*. The generation of Taine and Renan (LeRoy goes on to say) was characterized by the positivistic presumption that any object whatever could be 'inserted in the thread of one and the same unbroken connection.' But rationalistic arrogance has never failed to arouse an answering voice of protest and dissent; and of our own generation such anti-intellectualism is one of the controlling ideas. It is primarily the reactionary conviction that the analytic method of philosophy is abstract and empty. It is, says LeRoy, a demand for "complete experience, anxious to neglect no aspect of being nor any resource of mind." "Everything is regarded from the point of view of life, and there is a tendency more and more to recognize the primacy of spiritual activity." "That the attitude and fundamental procedure of this new spirit are in no way a return to skepticism or a reaction against thought cannot be better demonstrated than by this resurrection of metaphysics, this renaissance of idealism, which is certainly one of the most distinctive features of our epoch." "But . . . we wish to think with the whole of thought, and go to the truth with the whole of our soul . . . And what is that, really, but realism? By realism I mean the gift of ourselves to reality, the work of concrete realization . . . to live what we think and think what we live. But that is positivism, you will say; certainly it is positivism. But how changed! For, from considering as positive only that which can be an object of sensation or calculation, we begin by treating the great spiritual realities with this title."

"A new philosophy was required to answer this new way of looking at things. Already, in 1867, Ravaisson, in his celebrated *Report*, wrote these prophetic lines: 'Many signs permit us to foresee in the near future a philosophical epoch of which the general character will be the predominance of what may be called spiritualist realism or positivism, having as generating principle the consciousness which the mind has in itself of an existence recognized as being the source and support of every other existence, being none other than its action.'

". . . What Ravaisson had only anticipated, Mr. Bergson himself accomplishes, with a precision which gives body to the impalpable and floating breath of first inspiration, with a depth which renews both proof and theses alike, with a creative originality

which prevents the critic who is anxious for justice and precision from insisting on any researches establishing connection of thought."

" . . . Mr. Bergson has contributed more than anyone else to awaken the very tendencies of the *milieu* in which his new philosophy is produced, to determine them and make them become conscious of themselves."⁶⁶

In the new and significant relation which LeRoy and others find in Bergson to motives of thought so distinct as idealism, realism, and positivism, he is a writer of the fertility of genius; in the skill of his transfusion of these motives into a type of conception underlying a very deep and widely extended tendency of the age, he is the foremost expression of that tendency. In a very limited way, only, can such enthusiasm as LeRoy's, in a mind of his excellent discernment, be reasonably discounted. Trimmed of all its abounding fervours its fighting weight is still sufficiently impressive: how resonant to motives and convictions of actually controlling interest that mind must be which can elicit such response, needs no better proof than the response itself. No one else is so well attuned as Bergson to that demand for complete experience which, if anything, is the spirit of our time. No one else has carried so far in theory the possibilities of an intense instinctive living, as the answer to the riddle of the universe. What can be said for instinct as an organ of philosophy, Bergson has said.

All philosophers of immediacy hold Bergson as chief. Carr, like LeRoy, thinks Bergson's doctrine as momentarily original as those of the greatest classics. "Great scientific discoveries," he writes,⁶⁷ "are often so simple that the greatest wonder about them is that humanity has had to wait so long for them." Thus with Berkeley's "*esse est percipi*" and Kant's autonomy of the intellectual categories. And equally so with Bergson's interpretation of reality as life, "living creative evolution," as distinct both from solid matter and thinking mind.

James, while others find quite determinate differences between him and Bergson, was far less cognizant, himself, of differences than of agreement. He was one of the keenest of Bergsonians, and regarded himself, certainly with a great deal of genial modesty, as a follower, a disciple. " . . . if I had not read Bergson,"

66. *Op. cit.*, pp. 128 ff.

67. *Henri Bergson: The Philosophy of Change*, p. 12.

he says,⁶⁸ "I should probably still be blackening endless pages of paper privately, in the hope of making ends meet that were never meant to meet . . . It is certain that without the confidence which being able to lean on Bergson's authority gives me, I should never have ventured to urge these particular views of mine . . . In my opinion he has killed intellectualism definitively and without hope of recovery."

The quantity and quality of the study of Bergson's problems by others, which his own treatment of them has stimulated, is already an enviable monument to that best quality of philosophic genius in his work, its fertility of suggestion. Speaking, as the present writer must, from the point of view of critical reaction, the value of Bergson is indeed incalculable. This is no conventional phrase. His theoretical opponent is almost inclined to feel that the stimulus which Bergson's lucid exposition affords, to a mind of contrary conviction, to understand itself, must be a more precious good even than the quickening which his followers so eloquently confess.

The fact is that this eloquence is always more than eloquence; it is a fervour almost like religious fervour. Witness the words just quoted from James. Every true Bergsonian testifies in the same tone. Thus LeRoy:⁶⁹ "Mr. Bergson's readers will undergo at almost every page they read an intense and singular experience. The curtain drawn between ourselves and reality, enveloping everything, including ourselves, in its illusive folds, seems of a sudden to fall, dissipated by enchantment, and display to the mind depths of light till then undreamt, in which reality itself, contemplated face to face for the first time, stands fully revealed. The revelation is overpowering, and, once vouchsafed, will never afterwards be forgotten.

"Nothing can convey to the reader the effects of this direct and intimate mental vision. Everything which he thought he knew already finds new birth and vigor in the clear light of morning; on all hands, in the glow of dawn, new intuitions spring up and open out; we feel them big with infinite consequences, heavy and saturated with life. Each of them is no sooner blown than it appears fertile forever. And yet there is nothing paradoxical or

68. *A Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 214, 215.

69. *Op. cit.*, pp. 3, 4, 5, 6.

disturbing in the novelty. It is a reply to our expectation, an answer to some dim hope. . . .

" . . . whether, in the long run, we each of us give or refuse complete or partial adhesion, all of us at least have received a regenerating shock, an internal upheaval . . . henceforth a new leaven works and ferments in us; we shall no longer think as we used to think." As for the attitude of mind proper to bring to the reading of Bergson, "where the end is to understand rather than to judge, criticism ought to take second place. It is more profitable to attempt to feel oneself into the heart of the teaching, to relive its genesis, to perceive the principle of organic unity, to come at the mainspring. Let our reading be a course of meditation which we live."

And Gaston Rageot: " . . . the reading of a work of Bergson's requires at the very beginning a sort of inner catastrophe; not everyone is capable of such a logical revolution."⁷⁰ A little further on he speaks of this preparation of the mind to receive the Bergsonian doctrine as "*cette volte-face psychologique*."

Conversion to Bergsonism, indeed, suggests religious conversion. Compare James' words with the above. " . . . if, as Bergson shows, [the conceptual or discursive form of reality] cannot even pretend to reveal anything of what life's inner nature is or ought to be; why, then we can turn a deaf ear to its accusations. The resolve to turn the deaf ear is the inner crisis or 'catastrophe' of which [M. Rageot] spoke . . . [This] comes very hard. It is putting off our proud maturity of mind and becoming again as foolish little children in the eyes of reason. But difficult as such a revolution is, there is no other way, I believe, to the possession of reality."⁷¹

Is not this experience very suggestive of the "regeneration" of Christianity? I think it is, indeed; and I think this fact is suggestive of the essential nature of Bergsonism. One may turn a deaf ear to reason, one may execute a *volte-face psychologique*; but, whatever the rewards, it seems unlikely (to the unregenerate, of course!) that among them will be included a better comprehension of the *meaning* of reality.

70. *Revue Philosophique*, Ann. 32, No. 7 (July 1907), p. 85.

71. *Op. cit.*, pp. 272-3.



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